



Irish
you a
**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**
San
Diego

Irish Outreach & San Diego GAA Clubs Christmas Event For Those In Need

by Stephen Aherne, Executive Director Irish Outreach, San Diego

THIS CHRISTMAS THE IRISH community of San Diego is putting together an event to bring festive cheer to a group of San Diego families who need it the most. Irish You a Merry Christmas San Diego is a charitable initiative of Irish Outreach San Diego, driven by the members of the four Gaelic sports clubs of San Diego, Setanta Men's Gaelic Football Club, Na Fianna Ladies Gaelic Football Club, St Peters Hurling Club, and San Diego Youth GAA Club. San Diego has been a place of welcome and opportunity for Irish immigrants over the years, and this initiative will allow the Irish community to show it's gratitude to America's Finest City.

Irish You a Merry Christmas San Diego will culminate on Saturday, December 13, when we will put on an Irish Christmas at Roosevelt Middle School in Balboa Park for families currently living in San Diego's shelters. We will provide Christmas dinner for approximately 200 people, and our Irish Santa, resplendent in his green suit, will present gifts to the children. A whole array of other activities, including Irish music, dance, and crafts, will ensure that these children experience the magic of an Irish Christmas to give them a day that they will cherish for years to come.

Many of the children living in San Diego's downtown shelters attend Roosevelt Middle School, where over 85 percent of Roosevelt students qualify to receive some kind of financial assistance. Roosevelt is an IB World School, and follows the International Baccalaureate MYP curriculum, which promotes international awareness and concern, with an appreciation for the arts, world languages, music, and design. It also encourages compassion for humanity and instills a sense of student responsibility for community service. The school has made tremendous strides in bridging the academic gap despite the difficult economic circumstances of much of the student body.

Dr Arturo Cabello, the principal at Roosevelt, has several programs to help provide some of the daily amenities for

Roosevelt families in need that most of us take for granted. In order for our initiative to have long term benefits for Roosevelt's families in need, we aim to collect three hundred 64 gallon bags of clothes for "Cabello's Closet," the Principal's initiative to assist with the clothing needs of Roosevelt students and their families. We will also be collecting non-perishable food items which will also be distributed through the school. December 13's festivities will conclude with a "Big Check" presentation to Roosevelt Middle School to contribute towards these wonderful projects. In addition, we are working with Dr Cabello to introduce Gaelic Football and Irish Dancing lessons to Roosevelt Middle School in the year ahead.

Irish You a Merry Christmas San Diego is an extremely exciting initiative and we want to get the entire Irish community behind it. We have already secured some very generous corporate sponsorship and have a large team of volunteers, but we need your help to make this successful. Additional corporate sponsors are needed, as well as donations of cash, in-kind items, clothes and non-perishable food items. We are also asking you to help raise funds for this initiative. Be creative! Some suggestions include hosting a garage sale, a gift wrapping station at the mall, having a collection at your place of work, to name just a few. Irish You a Merry Christmas San Diego is entirely volunteer led and 100 percent of donations raised will go directly to assist the families targeted. This is the inaugural year of this initiative. We look forward to growing Irish You a Merry Christmas San Diego in the coming years to allow the Irish community help even more worthy causes in this great city.

Volunteers will be needed on December 13, to help with the event. To donate to Irish You a Merry Christmas SD and for progress updates and more details of how you can get involved, please visit the website at www.irishyouamerrychristmasd.org, email us at info@irishyouamerrychristmasd.org, or call Irish Outreach at (619) 291-1630.