



# Volunteer Emergency Families for Children

## Family Newsletter

### of Warren, Frederick, Winchester and Clarke

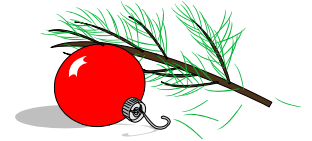
### VEFC Christmas Tree



The Richmond Marriott Hotel is sponsoring a “Festival of Trees” as a fund-raising event for the benefit of nonprofit organizations in the Richmond area. Each nonprofit group entering the contest decorated a seven-foot tree. The decorations reflect the mission of their organization.

Guests of the hotel and the general public will select which trees have the best decorations. Those trees will win cash prizes.

The VEFC main office in Richmond entered the contest and asked each VEFC district to create ten ornaments with the VEFC theme of hearts, homes, and children. These ornaments were to be primarily of red, green, and white. To the left is a picture of the VEFC tree. Unfortunately the details of the ornaments cannot be seen, but the tree is lovely!



### Training Sessions

Because of scheduling problems, the November training sessions were cancelled. New training dates are as follows:

- Session 1:** (informal meeting): Tuesday January 3
- Session 2:** Monday January 16
- Session 3:** Wednesday January 18
- Recap of Sessions 2 and 3:** Saturday, January 21
- Session 4:** Wednesday January 25
- Session 5:** Monday January 30
- Recap of Sessions 4 and 5:** Saturday February 4

Weekday sessions will be from 7:00-9:30 pm.  
Saturday sessions will be from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm.

In-Service training will be held this Spring

### Placements

#### October:

2 requests; 1 placement. Long-term care was found for the other child.

#### November:

11 requests; 6 placements; 5 found alternative care. Of the 6 children placed, 5 were teenagers.



## Some VEFC Stories

*Respite care is an important part of VEFC's work. Families with problems often need time apart in order to solve these problems. Parents with disabilities or whose children have disabilities sometimes just need a rest from the intense care needed in these situations. Last month we published two stories of respite care. Following are two more stories of this special kind of care. The first concerns a family under a great deal of tension; the second, a family with disabilities.*

**Tension in the home:** Jennifer is 13 years old. She and her mother seem to be fighting constantly. Jennifer's relationship with her sister is also very tense. Her father is seldom around. Jennifer's mother forbade Jennifer from seeing her boyfriend, who is over 18 years old. This, of course, increased Jennifer's anger. Jennifer dropped out of school for a time and home schooled herself. She is now back in school and taking AP and honors courses. She is on track to graduate a year early. She thinks her mother does not like her to do well in school. Her mother was not a good student and Jennifer thinks she is jealous.

Jennifer was placed in a VEFC home in the hope that the time away would help to relieve the tension in the home. She went to school while in their home. She ran errands with them and stayed home with them in the evenings. Mrs. Smith, the VEFC mother, said Jennifer was very quiet and reserved. She said Jennifer did not say much and spent a lot of time sleeping. She did tell Mrs. Smith that she had done some modeling jobs.

She returned to her home after the placement. A family meeting is scheduled to work through the tension.

**Physical and mental handicaps:** Johnny is 13 years old and suffers from cerebral palsy. This has caused partial paralysis of his right arm and leg. He is also mentally handicapped and functions at about a 6- or 7-year-old level. Johnny's mother also suffers from mental health problem and needs frequent respite care to help her cope with caring for Johnny's special needs.

Johnny has been placed with VEFC families before (last newsletter), but this was the first time he stayed with the Browns. Mr. and Mrs. Brown are an older couple of

grandparent age. When Johnny arrived with the social worker at the Brown's house, he did not want to get out of the car. He stayed in the car for half an hour. When he came into the house, it took another hour before he felt comfortable.

Finally, Johnny said "I like this atmosphere!" The Browns chuckled and said they wondered where that word came from. He cuddled up to them and called them his new grandma and grandpa—he now had two sets. The Brown's said that Johnny had good manners and did what they asked him to. Occasionally he apologized for things he imagined he had done wrong. Mrs. Brown assured him there was nothing to apologize for.

Johnny liked to watch TV. The Brown's tried to play board games with him, but his attention span was short and he would quickly lose interest. He loved for Mrs. Brown to read stories from children's books to him. Sometimes it seemed that he was not listening; but, if Mrs. Brown stopped reading, he would say, "You didn't finish the story!" They took him to the park and he immediately wanted to play with the children from another family.

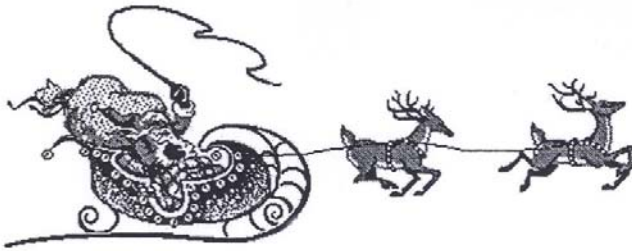
On Sunday morning, the Browns took Johnny with them to church. When members of the congregation were asked if anyone wanted to pray for particular needs, Johnny volunteered.

He offered a prayer thanking God for His presence with them.

Johnny went home to his mother on Sunday afternoon.



# Kid's Page



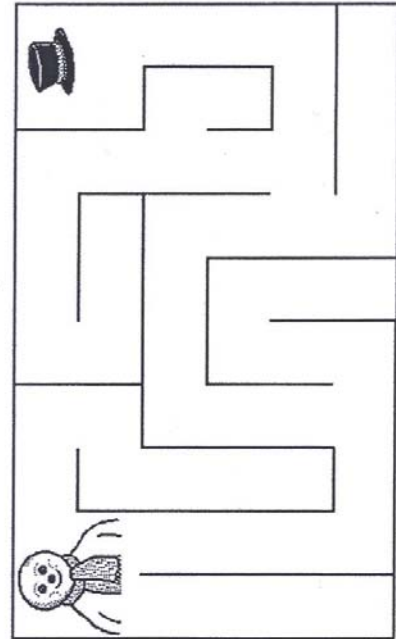
## Christmas Word Search

s u b c a n d y  
 l s b a l l e k  
 e n e l f t e d  
 d o l l s e r k  
 t w l g t r e e  
 o w n i a x a i  
 y b m f r m w c  
 s a n t a f r b

ball	elf	snow
bell	gift	star
candy	santa	toy
deer	sled	tree

## Christmas Riddles

- Q. What do you call a cat on the beach at Christmas?  
A. *Sandy Claws.*
- Q. Why are Christmas Trees such bad knitters?  
A. *They are always dropping their needles.*
- Q. What did the big candle say to the little candle?  
A. *I'm going out tonight.*
- Q. What kind of ball doesn't bounce?  
A. *A snowball.*
- Q. What do you get when you eat Christmas decorations?  
A. *Tinsel-itus.*



Help Frosty find his hat

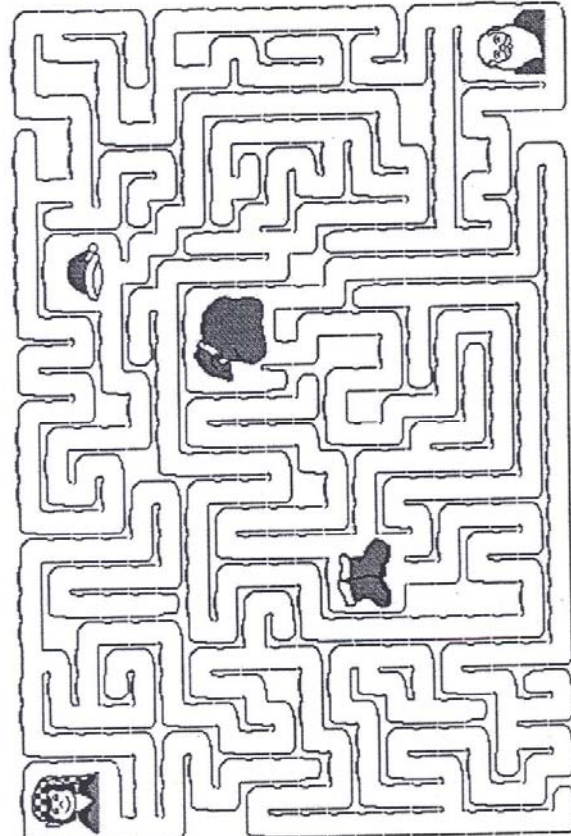
## Christmas Word Search



S M Y E O C N Q O Q D L  
 T R E E I L Z G F R N M  
 A T Y H P L O D U R N I  
 R T I N R A P C A N D Y  
 E E X Y E B R E H S A D  
 E M E E S N A M W O N S  
 D O N N E R N Q H S C W  
 I C S M N K C A S A E R  
 P B L I T Z E N S N R E  
 U E E H F F R O S T Y A  
 C L D C I J P P H A O T  
 E L F U G N R B C W T H



BALL	DEER	SANTA
BELL	DONNER	SLED
BLITZEN	ELF	SNOWMAN
CANDY	FROSTY	STAR
CHIMNEY	GIFT	TOY
COMET	PRANCER	TREE
CUPID	PRESENT	VIXEN
DANCER	RUDDOLPH	WREATH
DASHER	SACK	



Help the Elf get Santa ready

## A Little Humor

An elderly woman went to the Post Office to buy stamps for her Christmas cards. She asked the clerk, "May I have 50 Christmas stamps?"

"What denomination?" the clerk asked.

"God help us," the woman replied. "Has it come to this? Give me six Presbyterian, six Lutheran, six Catholic, 10 Methodist, and 22 Baptist."

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As you sit there today pondering Christmas and perhaps thinking of the bills you're going to get, look at it this way—think of all the garage sales for which you provided merchandise.

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A three-year-old girl and her little cousin were playing with a Nativity set. The girl moved the pieces around, identifying Mary and Joseph and the angels.

Then she picked up the three robed wise men carrying their urns filled with gifts. "And then, she explained to her cousin, "came the ladies with the coffee!"

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Sign outside a church: The original Christmas club.

Sign at a department store: Big pre-Christmas sale. Come in and mangle with the crowd.

*(The jokes above are from The Joyful Noiseletter.)*

### Children's Christmas Carols

A teacher in Atlanta asked her students to write the words to their favorite Christmas Carols. Here are some of the humorous lines she received:

**Deck the halls with Buddy Holly**

**We three kings of porridge and tar**

**On the first day of Christmas my tulip gave to me**

**Later on we'll perspire as we dream by the fire**

**He's making a list, chicken and rice**

**Noel, Noel, Barney's the king of Israel.**

**With the jelly toast proclaim**

**Olive, the other reindeer, used to laugh and call him names**

**Sleep in heavenly peas**

**In the meadow we can build a snowman**

**Then pretend that he is sparse and brown**

**You'll go down in Listerine.**

### Some Assembly Before Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas when all through the house  
I searched for the tools to hand to my spouse.  
Instructions were studied and we were inspired,  
In hopes we could manage "Some Assembly Required."

The children were quiet (not asleep) in their beds,  
While Dad and I faced the evening with dread:  
A kitchen, two bikes, Barbie's town house to boot!  
And, thanks to Grandpa, a train with a toot!

We opened the boxes, my heart skipped a beat"...  
Let no parts be missing or parts incomplete!  
Too late for last-minute returns or replacement;  
If we can't get it right, it goes into the basement!

When what to my worrying eyes should appear  
But 50 sheets of directions, concise, but not clear,  
With each part numbered and every slot named,  
So, if we failed, only we could be blamed.

More rapid than eagles the parts then fell out;  
All over the carpet they scattered about.  
"Now bolt it! Now twist it! Attach it right there!  
Slide on the seats and staple the stair!  
Hammer the shelves and nail to the stand."  
"Honey," said hubby, "you just glued my hand."

And then in a twinkling, I knew for a fact  
That all the toy dealers had indeed made a pact  
To keep parents busy all Christmas Eve night  
With "assembly required" till morning's first light.

We spoke not a word, but kept bent at our work  
Till our eyes, they went bleary, our fingers all hurt.  
The coffee went cold and the night, it wore thin  
Before we attached the last rod and last pin,

Then, laying the tools away in the chest,  
We fell into bed for a well-deserved rest.  
But I said to my husband just before I passed out,  
"This will be the best Christmas, without any doubt.

"Tomorrow we'll cheer, let the holiday ring,  
And not have to run to the store for a thing!  
We did it! We did it! The toys are all set  
For the perfect, most perfect, Christmas, I bet!"

Then off to dreamland and sweet repose  
I gratefully went, though, I suppose,  
There's something to say for those self-deluded...

I'd forgotten that BATTERIES are never included!

