Make A Child Smile by Erin O’Neill

Thanksgiving marks the official start of the holiday season, which means it is now time to get in the giving spirit. From now until Dec.3, the SCSU Volunteer Connection and Honors program are teaming up with the Bel Clare Collaborative to sponsor the annual “Make a Child Smile” gift drive. The goal of the gift drive is to collect unwrapped gifts for less fortunate children, ages newborn to 18 years, in the St. Cloud area.

A wish list of gifts has been created by Big Brothers Big Sisters, a member of the Bel Clare Collaborative, which includes new toys, games, puzzles, books, sleds, backpacks, athletic supplies, playground balls, board games, crafts, mittens, hats, jackets, and many more toys.

According to Volunteer Connection’s Nicole Lemmer, the greatest need is for children of middle school to high school age. “There are [teens up to] 18 year old students and they are the hardest to buy for.” Monetary donations are also being accepted and will be used by the Honors class and Lemmer to buy gifts for the age group with the least amount of gifts.

This is the sixth year of the gift drive and this year’s goal is to collect 350 gifts. Lemmer is excited about this year’s drive and is asking SCSU students, as well as the St. Cloud community, to contribute. “It’s a great opportunity and convenient because the drop off sites are all over campus.” Lemmer also explained the gift drive is different from the more renowned “Toys for Tots” gift drive because all of the gifts go to children in the St. Cloud area.

Monetary donations will be accepted at the Honors Office located in Centennial Hall, Room 216, the Center for Student Organizations and Leadership Development (CSOLD) desk, and the Atwood information desk. All unwrapped gifts can be dropped off in Atwood Memorial Center near Room 139, the Husky Bookstore, the Administrative Services Building, and in the lobby of any residence hall.

For more information, contact Nicole Lemmer in the Volunteer Connection office.