

My husband and I have a tendency to stretch ourselves too thin. We get overly involved in community and church activities to the point of feeling used. In our former parish we were lectors, Eucharistic ministers, on the parish council and the environment committee. When we ere asked to chair the fund raiser we agreed to do it for one year. We ended up heading it for five. When we relocated to a different area we agreed that we would not jump in with volunteering with our new parish. Within a year we were both on committees. Last year we were asked to head our parish fund raiser. I cannot believe that we said yes.

The parish had tried an adult prom the year before as a fund raiser. It was to be a formal dinner followed by a dance. Such few tickets were sold to parish members that the event needed to be opened to the community. The event raised a small amount of money once all the expenses were paid. The young families in the parish could not justify the price of the ticket and the cost of a babysitter for the evening. This year it was decided to have a family event. It was going to be a carnival evening with games for children and adults and concessions. We wanted very nice prizes. We decided that stuffed animals go over big with kids of all ages. We needed to find wholesale stuffed animals so that we would be able to keep the cost of the event down. We also solicited prizes from area businesses and took in donations for a silent auction.

One person on the committee volunteered to locate wholesale stuffed animals. They had worked in a large toy store for a while and thought that they could get some resources from the manager of the store. They thought is we could not find wholesale stuffed animals the manager of the store maybe willing to sell us some of the store's supply for the store's cost. The donations for the silent auction were very generous. People had great ideas of donating fishing trips, home made cookies for the holidays, lawn and yard clean up and other services as well as items.

A week before the carnival we had a meeting with all the committee members to make sure everything was in place. The person in charge of the wholesale stuffed animals came into the meeting carrying four huge stuffed bears. He said that he had several more in his van as well as smaller stuffed animals. He would not give us the name of the benefactor, but it turned out that an owner of a warehouse for wholesale stuffed animals anonymously donated the prizes. We new that all the kids that came were going to be delighted with the animals.