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## Christmas Comes to P-Town



Angel Ochoa, Perris Mayor Pro Tem Rita Rogers and Andre Mitchell will be giving away hundreds of toys to help brighten the holidays for underprivileged children in the Perris Valley.

Christmas came early for dozens of underprivileged Perris kids this week as supporters of the City's P-Town Combat Sports Academy bought and distributed toys, books, shoes and other goodies collected during an annual gift drive.

Perris Mayor Pro Tem Rita Rogers teamed up with retired police officer Andre Mitchell and gym co-owner, trainer and manager Angel Ochoa to collect and purchase holiday gifts. This year marks the eighth-year P-Town has brightened the holidays for youngsters 5 to 18 years old.

"Christmas is really about the little children and the smiles on their faces," Rogers said. "It's wonderful to support our non-profit partners like P-Town who do so much for the youth of our community."

Rogers dropped by the gym this week to scan the goodies collected, which included dozens of books for small children, stuffed animals, dolls, backpacks, footballs and at least one skateboard. Several organizations and individuals partnered to make the treasure trove possible. Those include P-Town, the World Boxing Council, Rogers and former Mayor Daryl Busch. Rogers contribute \$250 Busch donated \$500.

Rogers is a long-time boxing fan. She grew up in New York, attended fights at Madison Square Garden and Atlantic City and became friends with legends of the sport like Joe Louis and Sugar Ray Robinson. She said she appreciates the commitment of the P-Town sports academy to keep kids off the street and teach them self-esteem through boxing. In addition, the gym uses teacher volunteers to help students in math and other subjects.

"This makes me feel great," Ochoa said. "It's my favorite time of the year."



Perris Mayor Pro Tem Rita Rogers sits between Angel Ochoa, co-owner of the P-Town Combat Sports Academy and Andre Mitchell, who together train and mentor hundreds of local children and young adults.

Mitchell spent his law-enforcement career as a fugitive tracker, travelling across the U.S. to arrest and bring back to Los Angeles to face justice. On those long flights, Mitchell said he talked to many offenders and was struck by how many came from single parent or no-parent homes. Fifteen years ago, he teamed up with the City to create supervised athletic programs to keep youngsters and teen-agers on the right path. The collaboration has resulted in the Patriot Park sports complex for football and soccer as well as the P-Town Combat Sports Academy.

"We wanted to keep kids off the streets," Mitchell said. "I am most grateful for the help and support of the City of Perris. We could not do this without the City's help."

Mitchell said the holiday toy and gift drive brightens the givers as well as those receiving.

"It puts a smile on our faces the whole year," he said.

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