



How Roy Moore's dedication to the Penrickton Center for Blind Children sparked Ford, UAW involvement



Every year around Christmas time, Roy Moore dresses up as Santa Claus for the kids at the Penrickton Center for Blind Children in Taylor, Michigan. His wife joins him as Mrs. Claus, his dog as Rudolph, and at one time even his children would dress as elves. Roy has done this for about 30 years.

“Roy doesn't play Santa Claus because he has a great beard or a huge ego...he does it because he truly cares,” Penrickton Executive Director Kurt Sebalý said. “You can tell that when he visits our children.”

Roy is a Tow Driver at the Woodhaven Stamping Plant and has been with Ford for 46 years. He started at WSP when it first opened in 1965 and has been there ever since.

The Penrickton Center for Blind Children is a private non-profit agency, that provides five-day residential day care and consultation/evaluation services to blind, multi-disabled children ages one through twelve. Roy's involvement with Penrickton started in the late 1970s when he was selected as Community Service Chairman of the Woodhaven Kiwanis Club. One of the organizations that the Kiwanis Club supported was Penrickton. Roy didn't know much about the organization and wanted to find out what kind of support they needed most. At the time, Penrickton only treated around 5 children and was a relatively small establishment. Similarly, Roy's budget was rather small at around \$50.

When he first walked in and met some of the children he immediately thought of his own. He also thought of his sister-in-law who was blind from birth and his nephew who died of cancer at 3 years old. He was moved by what the people at Penrickton were doing and wanted to do more than what \$50 would allow him. So he and other members of the Kiwanis Club volunteered their time and built amenities for the children at the house. Even his wife got involved by baking cookies for the kids.



Roy and his wife Sheryl are dressed as Santa and Mrs. Claus. They sit with Emily from the Penrickton Center.

Roy still wasn't satisfied. He started taking advances on his vacation pay so he could buy Christmas gifts for the children. He did this every Christmas until one year a Labor Representative would not allow him to take an advance on his vacation pay. The representative

said that if he had a problem with it, then he needed to take it up with the Plant Manager. Roy did just that.

Roy explained the situation to the Plant Manager at that time who was Doug Snyder. Snyder was so inspired by Roy's philanthropy that he decided to give Roy the company credit card and told him to get whatever he needed for the kids. From there, the employees at the Woodhaven Stamping Plant adopted Penrickton.

"I supported Penrickton because I wanted do it," Roy said. "I didn't think the company would be interested."

In the late 1970s, in addition to all of Roy's other support, he decided to coordinate a Penrickton Christmas party at the UAW Local 387. One year the person that dressed as Santa Claus got sick and couldn't make it to the party. Even though Roy didn't have Santa's shapely figure, he let the costume sag over his body and played Santa for the children. He has done it ever since.

The Christmas party was one of the first organized field trips for the children of Penrickton. Sebaly was just starting out with Penrickton and he said that the children "enjoyed it immensely." According to Sebaly, the field trip to the union building spawned more field trips to places such as wave pools, water parks, Zoos, petting farms and many others.

"I have to say without hesitation that this event has changed Penrickton Center for the better," Sebaly added.



LaRon of the Penrickton Center sits on Roy's lap.

Over the years, Sebaly estimates that the total donations from the WSP employees would be over \$900,000. Roughly half of that total comes from the Frostbite Open Golf Outing which partnered with Penrickton in 1998 and is coordinated by the Local 387 and WSP. In addition, Penrickton also gets support from the Parts Redistribution center in Brownstown, Livonia Transmission and Experimental Vehicles. Sebaly pointed out that often times Penrickton Center is one of the first charities chosen by volunteers from the Ford Volunteer Corps program.

"Ford volunteers both hourly and salaried have made a huge difference from cutting down trees, landscaping, building a garage, to helping with our major renovation in 2001," Sebaly said.

Penrickton's goal is to help each and every child become as independent as they possibly can. It is the only charity in Michigan that works exclusively with blind, multi-disabled children and they do this without state, federal, United Way or insurance monies. Most importantly, there is absolutely no charge for their services and they exist solely through private donations.

"Frankly, Penrickton Center would not exist without the support of Woodhaven Stamping Plant," Sebaly declared.

Over the years Penrickton has grown from having five (5) children in the 70s to now having over thirty (30). Roy's selflessness and generosity was highly contagious among his peers because of his sincerity. He worked discreetly, not seeking approval or praise for his efforts. Now multiple locations within Ford Motor Company support Penrickton and the organization is thriving. Roy said that if he could make one child smile, then his efforts were worth it. If our wealth was based on the smiles we incite, then Roy is sitting on a fortune.