JD Denton, left, and Chris Denton provide high-horsepower support for the Yolo Crisis Nursery. JD is the new president of the Board of Directors, and Chris is helping plan the nursery’s March 18 benefit crab feed.

Nursery reflects on a bountiful holiday season

By Karen Adams
Member, Yolo Crisis Nursery Board of Directors
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After a showering of community support during the holidays, it’s only fitting that we say thank you this month. Executive Director Heather Sleuter tells humbling stories of the large and small demonstrations of goodwill toward the nursery and the families we serve.

- Our Friends group’s “Adopt-the-Nursery” program, new in 2015, proved wildly successful. Members wanted to find an easy way for donors to help replenish Nursery furnishings and build a stockpile of items to distribute to families in dire need. They hit upon the idea of gift registries at Target, Amazon and Mother & Baby Source.

Boy, did the program succeed.

“Our garage and shed were stacked to the ceiling with children’s clothes, baby gear, formula, diapers. Off-duty Yolo County sheriff’s deputies alone brought four truckloads of goods,” Sleuter said. “FedEx and UPS showed up at our door every day with packages that people ordered at the stores.”

“The generosity was almost beyond belief,” she said.

- As in previous years, the Friends also staged an “Adopt-a-Family” program in December. At mid-month, one regular participant called the Nursery to say he hadn’t been assigned a family but still wanted to help.
“I told him about the gift registry at Target,” Sleuter said. “He went there with his young daughter, then brought us four bags of clothes and 24 pairs of shoes. We’re so grateful for such committed supporters.”

- Friends co-presidents Nancy Storm and Martha Bernauer report they raised about $2,000 through two smaller fundraisers: A Holiday Fair during the First Friday Art-About and an Angel Wing project in Davis business. Thanks in particular to the National Charity League girls for baking holiday cookies to sell at the Fair, and to the participating businesses: Stella and Dot, Behind the Garden Gate, Love 2 Sweat, Fleet Feet Davis, the Paint Chip, Davis Home Trends, First Northern Bank and University Honda.

- Two Davis teenagers, preparing for their bat mitzvahs at Congregation Bet Haverim, produced a holiday show and donated the proceeds to the Nursery. Sophia Nachmanoff and Brianna Singer raised $538 though “The Golden Dreydl, an Original Nutcracker Alternative.” In addition to adapting and starring in the play, they staged a theater workshop for younger children and collected additional donations from theater-goers. Well done, girls.

- St. James Catholic Church collected donations under holiday trees for the nursery, as did Third Street Jewelers. Both do so every year without fanfare or even being asked, Sleuter said. Other religious communities and many service organizations collected donations on our behalf as well. Again, our sincere thanks to all.

- Davis firefighters, per custom, shepherded Santa around town for three days in December. They distributed candy canes and collected household items and diapers for the Nursery. First responders have long supported the Nursery, and we are grateful.

- Finally, we wish to thank all the individuals who made cash gifts. On Giving Tuesday (Dec. 1), we raised nearly $10,000 through our donation page at www.yolocrisisnursery.org. Donations continued to come in through year’s end, in amounts ranging from $25 to $10,000.

“At the midway point in our fiscal year, we’re in a solid place,” said J.D. Denton, who became board president on Jan. 1. “We’re on target in fund-raising, but more importantly, we’re meeting and even exceeding our objectives for our children and families. Keeping children safe and families strong are what it’s all about.”

Of course, Denton and Sleuter are quick to add that our need for donations and fundraising can never end. Sleuter said that she is already running low on large-size diapers; anyone who wants to drop off a package or two may call her at (530) 758-6680. (She’ll provide the nursery’s address, which isn’t publicly disclosed.)
Denton announced that tickets have just gone on sale for the Friends’ 4th annual “Krustaceans for Kids” Crab Feed, to be held March 18 at the Veterans Memorial Center, 203 E. 14th St., Davis.

Individual tickets cost $45. Sponsorships begin at $500 and include four to eight tickets. Both tickets and sponsorships can be purchased at www.yolocrisisnursery.org.

Last year’s crab feed, attended by about 320 people, raised $35,000 for the nursery.

“We’re hoping for an even better return this year,” Denton said. “And after seeing how generous the community has been in the last month or so, I believe it’s doable. Yolo County really is committed to seeing all of our children grow up in safe, stable homes.”