

# Rangers' Toy Drive highlights community bond between players, fans

December 12th, 2022



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ARLINGTON -- Rangers pitcher [Jon Gray](#) and his wife Jacklyn are always looking for ways to give back, whether that be serving the community, rescuing dogs or even [donating their hair](#).

On Monday, the Gray family gave back by spreading some holiday cheer as hosts of the Rangers' annual Toy Drive.

"I know that the last couple years have been kind of rough, but we know that we were able to help out a little bit and kind of bring things back to normal," Gray said.



Jun 17, 2022

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Jon Gray's excellent outing

In its Globe Life Field debut -- the drive was held virtually in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions and at Choctaw Stadium in '21 during the lockout -- over 750 gifts were donated throughout the three-hour event that

benefitted the Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex [Christmas Store](#), which provides parents with free gifts for their children.

After learning about Mission Arlington, what it stands for and its importance to the Arlington community, Gray said that the opportunity to host the Toy Drive alongside Jacklyn “fit perfectly like a shoe.”

“Living down here feels a lot like home for us,” said Gray, a native of Shawnee, Okla. “We feel like the community around us is our community, so we want that to be as best as it can be.”

This year’s Toy Drive marked the 12th consecutive year the Rangers have been involved in a holiday initiative that provides toys to children and families in need during the holiday season. On Monday, hundreds of fans lined up at the ballpark with toys and, in return, they received free autographs from players, alumni and local broadcasters, as well as a ticket to a select 2023 Rangers home game.

“For Jon to do this is really cool,” rookie [Josh H. Smith](#) said. “I think it's nice, just because the fans, they make the organization. And you see how supportive they are, so it's very cool just to meet them face-to-face.”

Players like Gray, Smith, [Taylor Hearn](#), [Jonah Heim](#) and a number of others were in attendance for the autograph sessions, along with assistant hitting coach Seth Connor, several alumni like David Murphy and Darren Oliver, as well as Rangers Hall of Famers Jeff Russell and Michael Young.

- [Rangers players embrace giving back](#)

Hearn, the [Rangers’ 2022 Clemente Award nominee](#), enjoys events like the Toy Drive as much as Gray. A native of Royse City, Texas, a town about 50 miles from the ballpark, Hearn has always wanted to give back, no matter what team he was on. But once he was traded to the Rangers in 2018, the pitcher set bigger goals for the community he was serving -- his own.



Nov 18, 2022

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Rangers hand out turkeys

“[Making an impact in the community] feels great, because that’s something I’ve always wanted to do,” Hearn said. “[I want] kids to see that a kid from the same Metroplex can make it to the Major Leagues.”

Smith recalled attending similar events as a kid and getting the chance to meet the players that impacted him. Making that kind of difference on the life of kids and other people is a big part of the game, Smith said, and he hopes to put together an event of his own one day.

“I have some ideas, so hopefully one day we’ll get them out there,” Smith said.