

Santa's helpers, the Hagaman family.

Every year for the past decade, December has meant an influx of pre-loved toys and gifts to Earl and Lani Hagaman's music room. From Teletubbies to twinkling stars and teddy bears in every shape and size, toys arrive from across the nation for boys and girls in Christchurch.

Lani Hagaman, Executive Director of Scenic Hotel Group, the largest New Zealand owned and operated hotel chain, says Scenic Hotel staff from up and down the country have all contributed.

"Every November, we ask staff and their families to search through their closets and attics and drag out those old toys that could go to a new family. We're constantly overwhelmed by the generosity of all our staff members, and this year is no different.

"Our Scenic and Heartland Hotels become collections points and we arrange to have all the toys delivered here to our Christchurch home early December. Our team of Santa's helpers get the toys cleaned up, mended where necessary and packaged up for delivery by the Christchurch City Mission over Christmas."

In addition to the toys for children, Lani and Earl have also packaged up into recyclable gift hampers thousands of dollars worth of drinks and treats for food parcels. Glassware, towels and luxurious Les Floralties toiletries which are provided in all Scenic Hotel Group properties completes the presents for deserving families.

"Christmas isn't just about the kids, after all," says Lani. "We know it's still hard for many people in Christchurch. There's so much work to be done, and we want to do anything we can to help. Adding a couple of things to the Christmas tree might just be the difference between a smile and a tear. That's what really matters."

With more than 1000 toys and hampers delivered by Scenic Hotel Group to the Christchurch City Mission this week, more than 1000 extra smiles will be shared by Cantabrians on Christmas Day.

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