

# Santa's Helpers Make Christmas Brighter for Handicapped

Men of the Bennington helped play Santa Claus to 700 crippled children Saturday, December 21, at a special Christmas party for crippled children in Garden Grove.

Thirty-two Marines and 11 sailors volunteered to attend the party, which has become an annual event in that city since the first one was given in 1956.

Children afflicted with diseases ranging from mental retardation to cerebral palsy giggled with laughter at the antics of the clowns from the Blessed Sacrament Men's Club of Westminster, and had plenty of cookies on hand to eat. Santa Claus, himself, was present, passing out gifts to the children.

Benn men circulated throughout the campground talking with the children, helping those in wheelchairs, and assisting Santa.

Among the children present was David Welinski, 7, of Santa Ana, who is stricken with cerebral palsy. He undergoes frequent treatment at the United Cerebral Palsy Development Center in Santa Ana and receives specialized schooling so he won't be forced to learn any faster than he is able. Cerebral palsy is a disease which affects motor nerve control. External stimuli reach the brain in a normal fashion, but signals transmitted through the nervous system from the brain to the muscles become "scrambled" and the muscles sometimes overreact, underreact, don't react at all, or react when they are not supposed to.

Over his seven years of life, David has accumulated a basic vocabulary. He can say "mommy", "daddy", "yes" and "no", and knows the names of others in his family. For a short while Saturday, David played with a balloon. He seemed unaware of his condition as he batted the balloon, squealing with delight and smiling all over. David's mother explained, while he played, that David is not spastic, but rather athetoid, which means he frequently overreacts.

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IT TAKES SO LITTLE--ACL W. J. Ladensack proves that it takes very little to make a child happy. He was among 43 men from Benn who helped at the Crippled Children's Christmas Party at the Garden Grove Girl Scout Camp on Dec. 21. The party was hosted by Mrs. Emma Gughan of Midway City.



WHEE, WHAT THIS IS!--One of the children at the Crippled Children's Christmas Party couldn't wait for long, as ACL W. J. Ladensack joins her in her anticipation.