

Big day for 'littles'



DARRELL SMITH / News-Examiner

Lions Club member Dick O'Neal helps a youngster shop Saturday at Wal-Mart during the Christmas shopping spree sponsored by the club.

Lions, retailers make event special

BY DARRELL SMITH
dsmith@newsexaminer.com

The first day for "Big" Tony Moore, a volunteer with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Fayette County, and his "little" was a big one beginning with a shopping spree to Kmart.

The annual shopping spree for the littles in Big Brothers Big Sisters program and kids in the community who may not have had a Christmas is sponsored by the Connersville Lions Club.

Club President Mike Stevens said the club works with Kmart and Walmart for funding but the lion's share of the money to make the purchases comes from the fundraising activities of the club. He said Big Brothers Big Sisters does a wonderful job with the kids and it is a pleasure to help.

This year, 27 kids shopped at Walmart and 30 at Kmart, the first time to shop there, according to Chairman Ben Harvey.

"They made the decision to come and we're happy to have them," said Kmart Manager Chris Loch, Lions Club member and member of the board for BBBS. "To see these kids happy means a lot. That little girl (nodding to a girl at the checkout line), it's the first set of new clothes she's had this year. Those are the kids that need help."

Accompanied by Lions members, the bigs and other volunteers, the children were able to purchase up to \$75



DARRELL SMITH / News-Examiner

"Big" Tony Moore, a Big Brothers Big Sisters volunteer, talks with his "little" following the Christmas shopping spree Saturday at Kmart sponsored by the Connersville Lions Club.

worth of merchandise.

Judy Kaiser, a volunteer for BBBS, was taking her little shopping with the little's mother but said they snuck off to shop alone. She called it a wonderful thing the Lions do for the kids.

Following the shopping spree, the group had pizza at The Pizza Place, paid for by BBBS and the Lions.

Moore said he and his little — on their first day together — also planned to go bowling and watch a basketball game at the Regenstrief Community Youth Center.

"I wanted to help out and do what I could to give back in some way," he said. "He's a good kid."

He said each week, a "big" is supposed to spend one hour with the "little."

"To see the expression on kids' faces, that's what it's all about," said long-time BBBS board member George Gettinger. "We remember what Christmas was like when we were young and now we get to kind of relive what we had with our kids when we see the expression on the kids' faces."