

Hometown Hero: The Joy Project

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By: [Clarice Tinsley \(mailto:?\)](mailto:Clarice.Tinsley@fox4news.com)
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VIDEO POSTED: MAR 26 2018 06:30PM CDT
UPDATED: MAR 26 2018 06:31PM CDT

Eighteen years ago, 5-year-old Haley Whatley started The Bunny Drive. She wanted kids who were in Cook Children's Medical Center to have stuffed toys for Easter. She got her school and Tarrant County to donate new toys year after year.

When Haley graduated from high school, she selected Trudie Troublefield to lead The Bunny Drive. Trudie's been involved with the plush toy drive since she was a first grader and has led the effort for four years.

In honor of the founder, Trudie re-named it The Joy Project. Haley's middle name is Joy, and that's what the toys bring to the patients at Cook Children's Medical Center in Fort Worth and Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children in Dallas.

This week, Trudie hopes to take the toy donations over the 50,000 mark. In the meantime, she's feeling a mix of emotions. She's a senior at Westlake Academy. Since she'll be a Baylor Bear in the fall, she's giving The Joy Project to the third generation of leaders.



Trudie's selected 16-year-old Brooke and 13-year-old Carys Henry to be the next Bunnies-in-Chief. They're the daughters of FOX4 Chief Meteorologist Dan Henry.

23-year-old Haley Joy Whatley Long is an expectant mom, Haley and her husband, CJ, are expecting a baby in October.

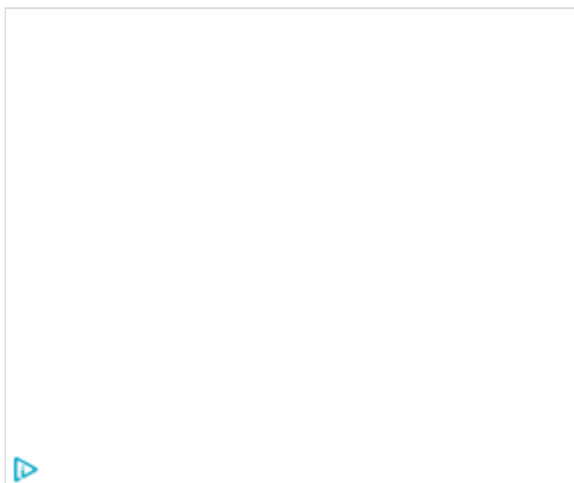
Money for stuffed toys is accepted all year long. To donate, log on to www.promise.cookchildren's.org (<http://www.promise.cookchildren's.org>).

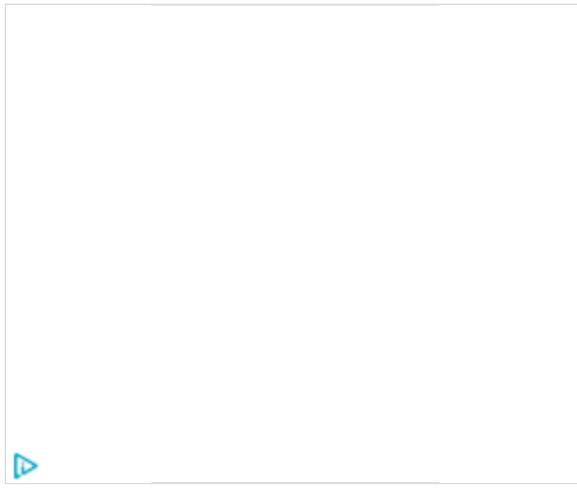
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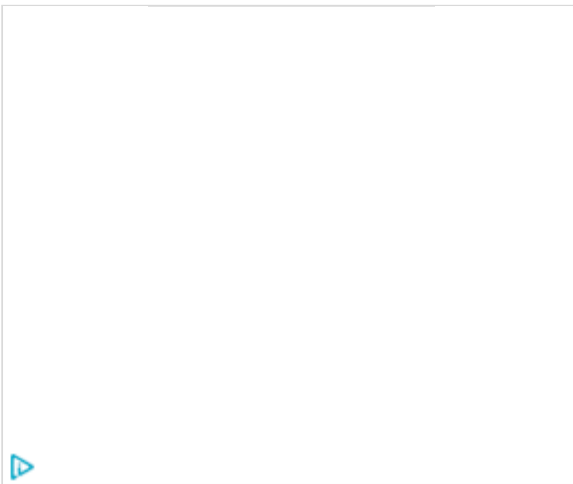




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