

MEDIA RELEASE

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UConn Men's Basketball Team Makes Special Delivery

Head Start family receives Huskies visit, Christmas tree, and presents in time for the holidays

HARTFORD— Christmas came a little early to 10 lucky Hartford families this year, thanks to the generosity of the UConn Huskies Men's Basketball team and Coach Kevin Ollie. Chosen from a list of families in Community Renewal Team's Head Start program, the 10 families received a Christmas tree, decorations and presents for each member of their family.

But Desirer Olmo and her three children received an extra surprise Sunday, Dec. 15. UConn players and coaches arrived at her home to set up and decorate a new Christmas tree, placed presents underneath, and spent quality time with her family.

"I cried a little when I was told about this visit," said Desirer, who spent last Christmas in a homeless shelter and now faces eviction. "Because the situation we are in now would not allow me to buy gifts for my kids and celebrate Christmas that way. The joy on my daughter's face was everything for me."

Sunday's delivery taught The Huskies how much it means to give back to the community.

"It was just great to be with those families and I know our kids got something special out of it," Coach Ollie said. "It was a blessing. We were going to pass out gifts, but at the end of the day, we got the gift because of the special moments that we had, especially with the children."

For Desirer having a Christmas like this beyond anything she hoped for and the special delivery relieved a lot of stress as she was wondering how to afford gifts this year for her three children.

"It was a great experience," said senior Niels Giffey. "Having the chance to give back to the people, is just a special feeling. They were very excited to see us and we were happy to be able to spread some Christmas spirit."

"One of the children told me they had never had a Christmas tree before," added freshman Amida Brimah. "They didn't know we were bringing gifts and it felt so good to put a smile on the kids' faces."

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Community Renewal Team, Inc. is the designated Community Action Agency for Middlesex and Hartford Counties and is the largest non-profit provider of human services in Connecticut. The agency's mission is Preparing Our Community to Meet Life's Challenges. The mission is achieved each day by helping people and families change their lives and create their own opportunities in becoming self-reliant while making sure basic needs are met. CRT's programs include Head Start, Meals on Wheels, energy assistance, supportive housing and shelters, and many others, serving people in more than 60 cities and towns in both our core catchment area and throughout Connecticut. Visit the NEW www.crtct.org.