Written by Raymond Markarian
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It is beginning to feel a lot like Christmas in San Francisco. The Straight Forward Boxing Club held their 2nd Annual Holiday Toy Drive on Friday, December 21st. This occasion was put together in an effort to raise the spirit of underprivileged kids that may not get to celebrate the holiday season in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Prospect Karim Mayfield, head trainer Ben Batista, and the rest of the SFC gang contributed in making children of all age groups feel the love of the holiday spirit.

The atmosphere was truly heartwarming. There was barely enough room to walk in the jam packed boxing gym, children were quietly anxious, proud parents wore happy smiles, and the Straight Forward Boxing Club had their hands full. Keeping the joyful peace with a bunch of anxious children striving to earn their gift is not an easy task. But Ben Batista, among others took it in stride.

The event was a throwback of sorts. Being inside the gym made me feel like I was on a street corner of a 1970s Brooklyn neighborhood watching a happy group of people pass out a parcel of gifts to the grateful parents and children who appreciate and need it the most. It was humbling to watch the SFC give out presents because of the lasting affect this type of gesture can have on children.

The idea of the SFC Holiday Toy Drive was meant to encourage the feeling of holiday cheer for children that have parents who are either incarcerated or no longer living with them.

In reflection, members of the Straight Forward Club know that all of their hard work pays off for the greater good. Ben Batista said, “I give praise to God for helping us put this together because without God none of this would be possible. We realize there are some people less fortunate than others. This was our way of giving back. God gave to us, so we are just giving back. We are happy to put a smile on people’s faces.”

KMEL Radio Station, Walden House Treatment Center, and a few other independent investors contributed thousands of dollars that was raised for gifts. Batista said, “We try to encourage other boxing gyms to do the same thing. The SFC are trend setters, we don’t follow trends, we set trends.”

On a personal note, the entire event put me at a loss of words. It is always good to watch people provide for others because there are not enough that do. The SFC has the right idea. Giving a gift feels much better than receiving one. There were approximately 300 people in the gym. Each child and parent that received a present signed Christmas cards. Those cards were to be sent back to the helpful sponsors.

On behalf of TheSweetScience.com, and myself, I wish all of you a happy holiday season!