



**'Cold hands and warm hearts'  
Weather doesn't stop egg hunt, kind donations**

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BY HANK BECKMAN Special to The Sun

Seven-year-old Becky Budds said it was "too cold" to be out doing much of anything yesterday morning.

But she bundled up and joined her younger brother Brad, 3, and more than 2,000 other brave souls in the 27th annual Naperville Jaycees Easter Egg Hunt.

Fifteen thousand eggs spread over four softball fields were gone in about 13 minutes as kids scrambled to get their share of the bounty during the Jaycees' annual Easter egg hunt Saturday morning at Frontier Park.

Keeley Doll, 9, spreads a handful of the 15,000 eggs that were stuffed by the **Naperville Jaycees** for the annual Easter egg hunt Saturday at Frontier Park.

Co-sponsored by the Jaycees and the Naperville Park District, the day has grown into an annual tradition of holiday fun where Naperville youngsters scramble around the softball fields of Frontier Sports Complex in search of brightly colored Easter eggs.

"Cold hands and warm hearts are the theme of the day," Mayor George Pradel said. "Even though it's freezing, the children are excited."

The cold weather kept the crowd down somewhat from previous years, but there were still plenty of hunters to pick clean the four separate fields.

"We're happy about the turnout," Jaycees event chairwoman Laura Beatty said. We were worried about it because of the snow, but Naperville always comes out."

Beatty sounded the opening bell promptly at 10 a.m., instigating a mad dash for more than 15,000 eggs, which came courtesy of the Factory Card and Party Outlet, a specialty store located in the Route 59 shopping district.

The four fields were divided by age, from the toddlers of 1 to 2 years to the older children of 7 and 8.

It took approximately 13 minutes for the snow-covered fields to be picked clean.

Along with the eggs, the Jaycees had Easter baskets for children who might have missed their chance or were late arrivals.

And the Easter Bunny was on hand just in case anyone wanted a picture with him.

WERV 95.9, The River showed up for the festivities.

"We come out to a lot of the events in town," said WERV intern Jon Peletis. "Naperville people are the most fun."

The needy were not forgotten.

Many participants brought nonperishable food donations for the Naperville Loaves & Fishes Community Pantry, resulting in a waist-high stack of supplies for needy families.

For the kids, it was all about the eggs.

Becky Budds wasn't sure how many she would get, saying "it depends on how many I find."

She came away with five eggs, but her brother Brad was a little put off by the throngs on his field and simply walked off the other way.

Chris Shamblin, 6, got a basket full of eggs, and was even happier that he was going to his aunt's house for another hunt.

Some of the hunters shared their strategy, the most successful proving that speed cannot be taught.

"I got 12 and I just ran as fast as I could go," Eliana Dias, 6, said.

Others had a more nuanced approach.

"I ran fast, but I ran right to the middle," said Brandon Do, 5, after claiming 22 eggs. "Then I followed the crowd for more."