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Grandson of senior center namesake brightens holiday



Nathan Harmon shakes Lance Williams' hand Wednesday after receiving Christmas gifts from the teen at the Carolyn B. Mosby Senior High-Rise in Gary. (Carole Carlson / Post-Tribune)

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Lance Williams never met his grandmother, but he's keeping her memory alive.

The boy spent Wednesday afternoon distributing gifts to residents at the Carolyn B. Mosby High-Rise, a Gary Housing Authority complex for senior citizens at 650 [Jackson St.](#)

"I wanted to do something special for Christmas and I got the idea of giving presents to people at the Mosby high-rise, named after my grandmother," said Lance, 13, of Indianapolis. "I thought it would be something generous."

Lance and his mother, Carolyn E. Mosby, packed up about 300 wrapped gifts and drove from Indianapolis to Gary. Each of the center's 143 residents received two gifts.

Lance said he raised about \$2,000 through an online fundraising page to purchase the gifts. He also made the video for the page. Seniors received blankets, scarves, and gloves, ear muffs and socks.

"It makes me feel great to give all these people something for Christmas," he said. Although he never met his grandmother, a state legislator who died in 1990, he understood her impact. "This makes me realize more and more just how important my grandmother was," he said. "It's too bad I didn't know her."

Mosby, who died at age 57 from cancer, served as a state representative from 1978 to 1982 and as a state senator from 1982 until her death in 1990. She's credited with authoring the first legislation to bring casino gaming to Gary, although it was her successor, former state Sen. Earline Rogers, of Gary, who carried the bill across the finish line.



Mable Noel receives Christmas gifts Wednesday from Lance Williams at the Carolyn B. Mosby Senior High-Rise in Gary. Mosby was Lance's grandmother. (Carole Carlson / Post-Tribune)

The senior housing center was named after Mosby in 1991.

Resident Nathan Harmon, who received gifts from Lance, said he knew Mosby. "It's a good thing he's doing. It's beautiful," he said.

Lance and his mother began purchasing the gifts in November. He received help wrapping them from his fellow National Junior Honor Society members at St. Monica School in Indianapolis where Lance is in eighth grade.

Lance and his mother are forming a non-profit organization and they plan to return next year, as well.

"If I can do something special for people at Christmas, then other people can too," he said.

Carole Carlson is a freelance reporter for the Post-Tribune.