

County children and adults received a gift thanks to a Lithonia- jackets Dec. 30 during the "Warm Coats and Warm Hearts" event.

*H.O.M.F. Ora*

Nonprofit organization Helping Oppressed Mothers Endure held a coat drive Dec. 30 at the Redan Recreation Center in Lithonia. Photos provided

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# St. Pius X retires Kelley Cain's jersey

**BY CARLA PARKER**

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No future player on St. Pius X girls' basketball team will ever have 52 as her jersey number.

The program retired the number that belonged to 2007 graduate and All-American **Kelley Cain** on Dec. 28. Cain is one of the most accomplished players to come through the program. During her four-year career at St. Pius, Cain scored 2,017 points, grabbed 1,420 rebounds, totaled 194 assists and 219 steals and blocked 660 shots.

Cain, who currently plays in Poland for the Energa Torun basketball team, said it is

humbling to have her number retired.

"I obviously couldn't have done this without my coaches and my awesome teammates through the four years I was here," she said. "I was shocked when my mom told me."

Cain won three state titles while at St. Pius (2004, 2006 and 2007). She averaged 20 points and 13 rebounds per game. She was the first player from St. Pius girls' basketball program to be named a *Parade*, *Nike*, *USA Today*, *Women's Basketball Coaches' Association (WBCA)* and *McDonald's All-American*. She has been ranked among the top players in the state and played in several national tournaments.

While excelling on the

court, Cain also excelled in the classroom as a multi-year honor roll student. Cain said academics and basketball were part of why she enrolled at St. Pius.

"I talked with my mom about that—it was her decision," Cain said. "I'm not going to lie—I wasn't for it because I wanted to be with my brothers [at Chamblee Charter High School] and where my friends were, but I don't regret any of it. It was some of the greatest four years of my life."

Cain, who is 6-foot-6, said she has always been tall for her age. However, basketball wasn't her first sport. She started playing soccer at four years old as a goalie, before playing basketball.



St. Pius X retired Kelley Cain's number 52 jersey. Photo by Carla Parker

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donated furniture items to single mothers in need who are starting over, sometimes from divorce or domestic violence situations. Collectively, more than 7,500 moms and children have received sofas, dinette sets, beds, computer desks, TVs, lamps, small appliances, dishes, linen and bedding since the organization's inception.

H.O.M.E. spokesperson **Carolyn Tolbert** said the organization expanded its reach in 2017 by participating in different community related events.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, organization officials hand delivered gallons of water to Baytown, Texas. The organization collected approximately 300 cases of water through the month of Septem-

ber. Tolbert, husband of founder Carolyn, said the coat drive was more than just handing out winter clothes. He said it was about getting into the community and lending help to those in need.

"The coats are one thing, but it's the words of encouragement that go along with it. We are there ministering as we give these coats out," Leotis Watson said. "So, the coat drive is excellent, but the word is going to exceed the coat drive."

Watson said the organization is currently in search of a 2,000-plus square foot warehouse to store its donated items.

"We have grown by leaps and bounds and so has our vision for 2018," Watson said. "We want a building we can call our own."



## JERSEY

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"I was a goalie from age 4 to 12," she said. "I played church league [basketball], and after 12 I guess I just decided to stick with basketball full-time, and it obviously paid off."

Her play on the court caught the attention of the late legendary college basketball coach **Pat Summitt** of the University of Tennessee. Cain fondly remembers Summitt's first visit to St. Pius to recruit her.

"It was kind of intimidating, but in a good way," she said. "When she first came she couldn't speak to me because of NCAA rules. I remember it was such a big deal that she was there, and I was really nervous. I was sitting at a lunch table and there was another lunch table in front of me. She sat at the opposite end and just stared at me the whole time while I ate lunch. I didn't know how to act."

Cain spent four seasons with the Tennessee Lady Volunteers. She was a member of the 2008 team that won the national championship, but experienced it from the sidelines after missing most of the season due to knee surgery, her first of two during her college career.

During Cain's three seasons on the court at Tennessee, she averaged 8.6 points and 6.2 rebounds per game and shot 60.6 percent from the field. She totaled 228 blocks in 92 games and led the Southeastern Conference in blocks for two seasons.

She set a Tennessee single-season record with 113 blocks in her sophomore year. She said playing for Summitt was intense, but Summitt was a second mother to her and her teammates off the court.

"Anything you needed, any problem you had you could go to her and she'd help you out," she said. "God bless her soul, we miss her so much. She had an awesome career."

Cain was drafted in the WNBA in 2012 by the New York Liberty as the seventh overall pick. She also played for the Connecticut Sun before leaving the WNBA to play full time in the European league. She said she learned a lot throughout her career to become a better basketball player, however, she credits God for getting her this far in her career through the injuries and adversity.

"It's by the grace of God I got [to having my jersey retired] and how I'm still able to play," she said. "I can't thank him enough."