

MEALS/

Food, toys aplenty at St. Anthony's

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scooped the leftover food into the bag, and replaced the bag.

People began lining up at St. Anthony's early Christmas morning and the kitchen began serving at about 11:30 a.m., said Doug Tuck, a longtime St. Anthony's volunteer.

The traditional holiday meal included turkey, ham, salad, cranberry sauce, yams and pumpkin pie.

Much of the food was donated, including 500 turkeys, Tuck said. While many of these birds were used for Christmas, some were frozen, to be used during the year.

St. Anthony's also offered visitors loaves of bread, yogurt, cottage cheese and other food to take home.

Many who came to St. Anthony's were there for more than a free lunch — they attended for the feeling of community.

"They got families here, and I ain't got no one," said Roy White, a dishwasher who lives at St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park. "I come for Christmas and Thanksgiving. I like watching all the different people."

Adela Zarazua of Redwood City said, "We make friends. We meet people. Sometimes we can ask for work."

The Christmas celebration was best for the children, she said.

"We are a poor family. We like to see the children have something," she said.

Outside the dining hall, there was a scene a minute. Trucks rumbled by, their beds filled with excited children opening their gifts. Firefighters kept other kids in line and prevented en-



JOE MELENA / PENINSULA TIMES TRIBUNE

Elva Gervacio and her children are excited about the toys the Redwood City family received as they leave St. Anthony's Dining Room in Menlo Park on Friday. The toys, donated by Menlo Park firefighters, were given away as part of St. Anthony's Christmas program.

terprising youths from making a second foray toward the toy trailer.

Inside, more than two dozen volunteers cooked, served, poured coffee and bussed tables.

A volunteer named Murali wished "Merry Christmas" to

each person who came through the line. "I'll try," said one man.

"Look around and see how many young people you see," Murali said. "It's sad, heart-breaking, to see more families and more children" who must come to St. Anthony's for donated meals.