

Birthday Party Project brings joy to homeless in Mpls.

Lindsey Seavert, KARE 6:55 p.m. EDT October 13, 2015



(Photo: KARE)

MINNEAPOLIS – The magic comes only once a year, the party hats, decorations and cake all marking a true emblem of childhood.

It's why [The Birthday Party Project](#), an organization newly launched in Minneapolis was born, knowing that while every child has a birthday, every child does not have a home.

The Birthday Party Project started in Dallas with a mission to bring joy to children who are experiencing homelessness and has now expanded to eight cities. In Minneapolis, volunteers throw parties for children at the People Serving People shelter on the second Friday evening of each month.

"Super exciting and adrenaline is pumping," said Laura Gruman, a Birthday Party Project volunteer from Maple Grove. "All the time, I have to keep myself from crying. It's worth it, if we can just give these kids the best hour we can, it makes it all worth it."

More than 250 kids stay at People Serving People each night, and this month, more than 20 kids with October birthdays crowd the cafeteria and are greeted with a DJ and dance floor, balloons, streams, gifts, prizes and games. Among the birthday guests are twins Noahh and Ayngel, who attend school in Minneapolis. They turned 12 on Oct. 8.

"I am happy that we are dancing together, having fun, that's what twins do," said Ayngel. "The great gift for me is to be happy, for this and for what God gave us."

The true joy also belongs to their mom, Quanetta, who suffers from a severe heart condition and is frequently hospitalized while trying to care for her six children.

"It's hard to try to take care of your kids for one and when their birthdays come and you can't give them anything and they provide this, it means so much, I could never say thank you enough," she said.

For Birthday Party Project volunteers, the smiles on the children's faces is enough, especially when the room breaks out in birthday song. Every child is given a giant birthday donut made especially by Hans Bakery in Anoka and also receives hand picked presents.

"If we can make their day, that's all that matter, everybody deserves to have a great time on their birthday," said Abbey Baker, another volunteer leading the monthly parties.

"It brings a smile to our faces too," said Baker.

To date, The Birthday Party Project has celebrated over 1,350 birthdays with 11,500 kids in attendance and will host 180 parties in 2015.

The Minneapolis chapter of The Birthday Party Project is always looking for volunteers to help with monthly parties, on the second Friday of each month at People Serving People at 6:30 p.m.

To volunteer, learn more [here](#).