



Serving a Christmas dinner for 300 is not the only project Jack Seiverling (right) and his son do. At their Ephrata office, they sell toys that participants in the Teen Challenge program make.

## Father And Son Plan Christmas Dinner For 300

**BY LOU ANN GOOD**  
 EPHRATA (Lancaster Co.) — While many folks plan holiday dinners, few will serve as many as Jack Seiverling will on Christmas Day.

He's planning a menu for 300 to 325 people. He needs 25 to 30 turkeys, 250 pounds of cookies, 30 dozen dinner rolls, plus all the other trimmings that makes a holiday dinner complete.

The dinner isn't for Seiverling's family. It's for Teen Challenge Center, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program.

This is the eighth year that Seiverling is planning the Christmas dinner for Teen Challenge. "People hear about it and call me up and ask how much do you need?" Seiverling said. "One farmer donates a truckload of potatoes every year. Cookies come from everywhere—and those guys really appreciate those cookies because many have never eaten homemade cookies before."

Seiverling's interest in the Center was kindled in 1982 when his son Jeff entered the program.

Jeff had abused drugs and alcohol for 10 years and had drifted in

and out of several drug and alcohol programs.

Seiverling said, "We had tried everything. Nothing worked. But when Jeff entered Teen Challenge, we knew this program was different. It was going to last."

It did. According to Seiverling, the program, which stresses giving up drugs, smoking and alcohol "cold turkey" and finding God, has a documented 86 percent cure rate. It's strictly subsidized by donations, not government programs.

Seiverling, overjoyed to see his son turn from a life of crime and drugs, volunteered to serve a Christmas dinner to the Center in 1982 while his son was still part of the program.

The Seiverlings found the experience so rewarding that they continue the tradition every year. People often question Seiverling, "How can you give up Christmas?"

Seiverling counters, "How else would we want to spend it? There's no better way to celebrate Christmas than by helping others. Everyone at the Center is so happy and thankful. And in the evening we come back and celebrate with the family."

Jeff, with his wife and other family members, accompanies his dad on Christmas Day. Jeff said, "I can tell the guys, I was in this program one time, too. I didn't think there was any hope for me, but God turned my life around. Hearing my story gives them hope that God can do the same thing for them."

The Seiverling's Christmas project is actually a year-round effort. At their Arthur Yeager real estate and insurance agency in Ephrata, they sell wooden toys made by participants at the Center. The toys include puzzles, crayon holders, trains, car carriers, lumber trucks and wall plaques. One weekend each December, the father and son team also set up a toy display at a mall to sell the toys and to tell others about the program that benefits those trying to overcome substance abuse. This year, the wooden toy display will be set up at Lincoln Mall, Ephrata, on December 22 and 23.

"We're not in this for money," Seiverling said. "All the proceeds goes to the program. We want to do our part in helping a program that helps so many men put their lives back together."



This is the gang that Jack Seiverling gets together to serve Christmas dinner to Teen Challenge Center. Most are family members who believe the best way to spend Christmas is helping others.

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