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Kids Go On A Shopping Spree

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REDLANDS - Early Saturday morning, volunteers and boards members from the Boys & Girls Club of Redlands shopped 'til they dropped with children from the Boys & Girls' Club getting them ready for school. The children were participating in Child Spree, put on by Mervyn's stores nationwide.

After pairing up with a child, volunteers hit the sale racks with \$100 to spend. Volunteers are urged to hit clearance racks and to make sure kids try on the clothes, even though the parents sent along clothes sizes and recommendations for what kids need.

Ryannyn Martin, 6, and her shopper Terecita Heppenstall started in shoes, trying on sneakers and boots to jump-start Ryannyn's first-grade wardrobe before stockpiling on pink shirts, dresses and jeans.

Ryannyn's 8-year-old brother Aiden was shopping with Brent Fite on the other side of the store.

"I like shopping cause my mom didn't tell me what to get," said Aiden with a smile as he perused the socks and underwear section.

"It brings tears to my eyes," said Doris Park, a 25-year Mervyn's employee who has been involved with the program since it started in 1992. She told a story about a boy one year who wouldn't let go of his new bag of clothes, it meant so much to him.

"Some of these kids can't get all new clothes," she said.

Mervyn's also sells merchandise to help raise money for the program. "Sprocket" dogs with backpacks sit at the east entrance, with 100 percent of the proceeds going to the program. The money helps enable each store to have \$2,500 to use, and stores urge the groups to match or donate to allow more children to benefit. This year, the Redlands Boys & Girls club added 10 more lucky shoppers to the list.

After the shopping was over, the kids were treated to a breakfast donated by McDonald's, and were given backpacks stocked with school supplies that were donated by the store's employees.

Since 1992, Mervyn's stores have helped 180,000 kids get ready for school.