

## 12 Faces of Christmas: 2014

The Fresno Bee December 24, 2014



Anthony "Tea" Gonzales owns peDal jUnkies and over the last five years has orchestrated a blanket drive for homeless in Fresno, deemed "Blankies for the Homies." He and a crew of volunteers descend on a random homeless encampment each Christmas to hand out the blankets and usually some other things which change each year, like socks, clothes and soup. CRAIG KOHLRUSS — THE FRESNO BEE | [Buy Photo](#)

The holiday season is a good time to stop and take notice of what's right in our world.

Thankfully, Bee reporters have never had to look far to find people committing acts of kindness. Flip through back copies and a theme quickly emerges: Folks doing nice things make heartwarming stories.

In that spirit, The Bee launched a special holiday report in 1995. The 12 Faces of Christmas [has reached its 20th year](#).

It's always been revealing in that the people we profile consistently say it's easy to be kind to others.

That's not to confuse "easy" with "breezy." These folks don't do what they do on a whim.

But, there's a lesson in their stories: Take the easy step of getting involved. The rest will feel like a breeze.

[Anthony "Tea" Gonzales](#) is among many who devote time helping the homeless. Gonzales and his peDal jUnkies bicycle group are devoted to a project he calls "Blankets for the Homies." Gonzales says handing out the blankets reminds him of the story in the Bible where Jesus feeds thousands with just five loaves of bread and two fish. "It

always feels like that. ... We're like, 'This line is not stopping, but we are still giving out blankets!' Man, it's the most rewarding feeling. Money cannot put a price on that, man, straight up."

Over 20 years, that theme is repeated in the stories of nearly 400 people profiled in Faces of Christmas, whether it's donating time to a mission, helping animals or just reaching out with a caring gesture, like [Paula Savino](#), who likes to reward people she reads about in The Bee by giving them a crocheted blanket.

And remember, it's easy to get involved. Turn inside to read about this year's 12 Faces of Christmas; take note of the "How you can help" line. Better yet, chart your own way to lend a hand. Either way, it's likely you'll find out the prescription to happiness that [Dr. Mylene Rucker](#) of Visalia shares: "I like to give back. I feel better when I give. They've even done studies with Mother Teresa and stuff — when you give, you feel happy."

Our 12 Faces:

[Bridgette Boothe: Fresno woman is champion of abused, abandoned pit bulls](#)

[Randy Coffman: Helping others enjoy the outdoors](#)

[Sew Caring: Easton group takes on mission projects](#)

[Alex Davis: Getting national recognition off the court](#)

[Feed Our Future: Duo delivers food to keep kids' bellies full](#)

[Marivel Flores: Going far beyond an internship](#)

[Anthony 'Tea' Gonzales: His 'Blankies for the Homies' aids Fresno homeless](#)

[Kit Macdonald: Fresno woman delivers "Kit's Kits" to homeless](#)

[Mylene Rucker: Visalia doctor assembles gift baskets for women in recovery](#)

[Paula Savino: She reads, then she crochets](#)

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