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Remembering Nova's Dunn Loring Christmas Sale

Rose Barrett and Julie Byrne started the sale in 1969. Mary Hicks was their contact with the African American community that Nova referred to as Dunn Loring .

The first Christmas Sale was held in Joyce Kilmer Middle School on a Saturday morning in December.

Nova members donated many things of value from their closets, basements and garages. Many members set aside items during the year for the sale. Items for sale included: clothing, bedding, cook wear, dishes, furniture, toys, books, games, stuffed animals, etc. (please add)

Many Nova volunteers helped gather, organize, display, and sell items for the Sale. For example, one member built reusable racks to display clothing.

Drinks and snacks were provided for both communities, which helped build friendship for everyone.

Minimal prices (25 cents to a dollar) were charged, except for large items. All income was given to their Church.

The Dunn Loring community members owned homes adjacent to Joyce Kilmer on an unpaved dirt road with no water or sewer service.

By getting the cooperation of Jim Scott, at the time a member of the Fairfax County Board, an underground water line was run from a fire hydrant in front of the school across the practice field to the dirt road near the houses where a single faucet was attached. Before that arrangement was made, Dunn Loring community members drove or walked almost a mile to the nearest 7-11 to buy water.

When the Dunn Loring community built a church nearby, the Christmas sale was moved into the Church basement. Because Pastor Winters did not want selling done in the church, adults were charged a \$5.00 admission. They could take whatever they wanted or needed from the donated materials. The admission funds were given to the church.

Turkeys for each family were donated by a Nova member. These were distributed at the sale.

Pastor Winters began each sale with a prayer of thanks giving and appreciation.

In later years, Nova purchased toys for the children. Volunteers wrapped gifts for parents and children. A raffle was held on the most expensive donated items, such

as furniture, TVs, radios, clocks, newly purchased towels and sheets, bikes refurbished by Nova members, and items nearly new.

Children who had grown up in the Dunn Loring Community and moved away returned with their children for the Christmas sale. It became a community reunion for them.

For a number of years, some Nova members occasionally attended services and other events at Dunn Loring Church (What's the church name?). Their singing was remarkable. Other member donated need items to individuals in the Dunn Loring community for home repairs and improvements. Mary Hicks from time to time would call Julie or Rose asking for help with some extreme need in their community, to which Nova always responded.

Those of us who knew Mary personally thought she was an amazing person. There are many stories to support that.

The history of this small African American community began after the Civil War, and for years, it existed next door to the growing and wealthy Tysons Corner, and the community needs for water, sanitary and storm sewers., roads and other County services were not provided.

After 33 annual sales, Nova ended its role with the Christmas Sale. Many Nova members had contributed a great deal of time, energy, ideas, and articles for sale. It had been a truly a Nova community project. The Dunn Loring community was ready to take over the Christmas Sale, and Nova was pleased for them because it had become a wonderful reunion for their church and a great help to those in need.