



FUN TIMES . . . Bradey Goss, 4, of Rasmussen met *Neighbours* stars Ashleigh Brewery and James Sorensen and *Australian Idol's* Kim Cooper at the party

Photo: SUZANNE LOWE

Stars shine for special kids

CHRISTMAS came early for more than 1000 excited youngsters on the weekend.

Heaps of toys awaited the kids at the Golden Casket Variety Special Children's Christmas Party, held at the Ryan Community Centre on Saturday.

Event manager Annemarie Hodson said the annual party allowed special needs children and their families to enjoy a relaxing night out and receive a pre-Christmas gift.

"It's a very special night for some very courageous kids and their families," Ms Hodson said.

The pint-sized partygoers were also treated to guest appearances by *Neighbours'* heartthrob James Sorensen — better known as Declan

Napier — his co-star Ashleigh Brewer, or Kate Ramsay, and local songstress Kim Cooper.

Fast-food clown Ronald McDonald was also there along with The Hamburglar and traditional guest of honour, Santa Claus.

Justine Jenkins, 13, said the highlight of the night was rubbing shoulders with her favourite stars.

"It has been excellent," Justine said.

"I was dancing on stage with Ronald and I got to meet Kim and Declan and Kate."

Justine's mother, Leanne, said she hoped the party would raise awareness of the need for more resources for special needs kids.