



Fontana Unified School District

Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fontana Unified Celebrates 25 Years of Spreading Holiday Cheer with Annual 'Fontana Santas' Event

FONTANA, CA – Fontana Unified School District students and families were treated to the sights, sounds and spirit of the holiday season as they received gifts and goodies from cheerful volunteers during the District's 25th annual Fontana Santas event on Dec. 17.

Almond Elementary principal Tim McCaffrey served as emcee for the event, playing upbeat holiday music and hyping up families from Fontana Unified's elementary schools as they drove through the District office parking lot, receiving stuffed stockings, backpacks, books and school kits, a variety of non-perishable food items, stuffed animals and more. The final stop on the families' journey was a visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus, who greeted students as volunteer elves hand-selected toys from a sleigh full of gifts.

"Fontana Santas is a very special tradition in Fontana Unified School District, and I am honored that I could be part of this effort to bring some holiday cheer to families in need," Interim Superintendent Juan M. López said. "Thank you to all of the local organizations, community partners and volunteers who have donated their time and resources to supporting this wonderful event."

The event culminated the District's annual toy drive, in which District employees, students, families and community organizations come together to gather donations and support Fontana Unified families in need during the holiday season.

The tradition began 25 years ago when Fontana School Police Officer Cindy Evaro and District employee Lydia Wibert learned a Fontana boy ran away from home after Christmas because he did not receive any presents. Evaro, Wibert and Fontana School Police collected toys and donations from local organizations and delivered them to students during the holidays.

Wibert, along with relatives of the Evaro – who died in 2014 – were among the many volunteers on scene, dressed in their most festive holiday apparel, to hand out gifts and bring smiles to students' faces. In between handing out gifts, Santa and Mrs. Claus kept spirits high and led the enthusiastic group of volunteers in dancing to "Cupid Shuffle."

Fontana Santas is hosted in partnership with the Fontana School Police Department, Fontana Teachers Association, United Steelworkers Local 8599, the Fontana Foundation of Hope, Fontana School Police Officers Association and the Fontana Management Association.

Volunteers also included Fontana Middle School Associated Student Body members; Fontana High School's law enforcement students; Summit High School video production students, as well as baseball

and softball student-athletes; staff from the District's Family and Community Engagement Department; the Fontana Unified Marketing, Communication and Engagement team; the District's executive cabinet; Board of Education members; and various school principals and District administrators.

This year's array of community partners included the Foundation of Hope, which provided toys, donations, volunteers and use of their building to prepare for the event; Inland SoCal United Way, which donated books and backpacks full of school supplies; God's Pantry, which provided families with a box of food; and Santa Claus Inc., Crafts Unlimited, TEC Equipment, the Fontana Boxing Club, OPR Communications, Walmart and CanAM Dental, all of which provided a variety of toys, gifts and other donations.

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

FUSD_FONTANA_SANTAS1: Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus and volunteer elves visit with Fontana Unified students during the 25th annual Fontana Santas toy distribution for elementary school families on Dec. 17.

FUSD_FONTANA_SANTAS2: A Fontana Unified family smiles with delight as Santa and Mrs. Claus greet them during the 25th annual Fontana Santas event on Dec. 17.

FUSD_FONTANA_SANTAS3: A festively dressed student volunteer hands out gifts to a Fontana Unified family during the District's annual Fontana Santas event, which provides toys and donations to families in need.

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