



# Fontana Unified School District

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## PRESS RELEASE

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## Fontana Unified Spreads Holiday Cheer during 20th Annual 'Fontana Santas' Celebration

**FONTANA, CA** – More than 450 Fontana Unified families jumpstarted their holiday break with a morning of games, arts and activities, and gift giveaways during the District's inaugural community breakfast and holiday celebration at Jurupa Hills High School on Dec. 16.

The breakfast marked the 20th anniversary of the Fontana Santas toy drive, which was founded when Fontana school police Officer Cindy Evaro heard about a Fontana boy who ran away from home when he did not receive any Christmas presents. Evaro, FUSD child welfare attendance officer Lydia Wibert and Fontana School Police then collected toys and donations from local organizations and delivered them to students during the holidays.

Each Fontana Unified school selected 10 families in need who received gifts for their children, ranging from infants to high schoolers, from Dec. 11 to 13. The students – nearly 1,000 in total – received three gifts each and were given a “golden ticket” inviting them to the community breakfast.

“Fontana Unified is committed to supporting the success and well-being of our students, and that extends to partnering with our community to ensure every student can enjoy the holidays,” said Michael Garcia, Fontana Unified's Director of Family and Community Engagement. “It is thrilling to see the Fontana community come together to spread holiday cheer and to support one another in times of need.”

In total, nearly 8,000 gifts were donated by Fontana Unified families, teachers and staff, Fontana School police, the Fontana Foundation of Hope, Kiwanis Club, Lions Club of Fontana and service organizations and businesses.

Kaiser High School's orchestra performed classic holiday songs as families enjoyed a breakfast buffet, took pictures with Santa and explored booths with carnival-style games, cookie-decorating stations, and arts and crafts activities, all staffed by Fontana Unified student and staff volunteers.

As families gathered small treats and gifts from each booth – including stockings full of school supplies from the Fontana Teachers Association – Fontana Unified administrators and staff raffled off larger prizes, including 25 new bicycles.

During the community breakfast, Fontana school police officers also delivered gifts to neighboring homes.

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“We would like to thank the Fontana Unified volunteers who ensured the success of this event and the local businesses and organizations who displayed tremendous generosity toward our students in need,” FUSD Superintendent Randal S. Bassett said. “With help from our close-knit community, we will continue to ensure all students have the opportunity to celebrate the holidays, year after year.”

**PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**122017\_FUSD\_SANTAS1:** A Fontana Unified student picks out a new bicycle at the Fontana Santas toy drive and community breakfast on Dec. 16, which provided food, entertainment and gifts to more than 450 Fontana Unified families.

**122017\_FUSD\_SANTAS2:** Fontana Unified students decorate holiday cookies at one of many activity stations during the Fontana Santas toy drive and breakfast on Dec. 16. The event marked the 20th anniversary of the toy drive, which was founded by Fontana school police officer Cindy Evaro.