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Río Hondo College Spreads Holiday Cheer with Annual Toy Distribution for Student Families

(Whittier, Calif.) – Río Hondo College (RHC) staff and community donors brought holiday joy to 140 student parents and 385 children through the Basic Needs Center’s annual Holiday Toy Distribution on Dec. 16, offering toys, food and festive activities on campus.

Student parents and their children strolled through a festive celebration during the Holiday Toy Distribution. Families paused along the way for a series of activities, including holiday crafts, movies, games and food. Parents had the opportunity to browse a “shopping area” of toys arranged by age group at the event, where they could pick the perfect toy for their child before heading to a gift-wrapping station.

“Río Hondo College strives to provide wraparound services for our student body, and our annual Holiday Toy Distribution is a testament to the kindness and generosity of our staff and community,” said Superintendent/President Dr. Marilyn Flores. “These donations directly benefit our student parents, allowing them to focus on their studies and successfully finish the semester, knowing their children will experience the joy of the holiday season. We are so grateful for the support that makes this celebration possible.”

The Holiday Toy Distribution was organized by the RHC Basic Needs Center Director Dr. Jessica Perea and was made possible through the generosity of College staff and community partners, including the El Monte Police Department (EMPD) and the National Latino Peace Officers Association San Gabriel Valley Chapter (NLPOA SGV), a nonprofit organization which seeks to build and strengthen bridges between law enforcement and communities.

The Basic Needs Center collected an estimated 1,000 toys through a series of toy drives leading up to the event. RHC staff donated approximately 125 toys during the College’s Holiday Open House, which was hosted by Dr. Flores’ office on Dec. 3, while the NLPOA SGV collected about 100 toys. This organization hosts various fundraising events throughout the year, such as the Menudo Run in Whittier Narrows, which allowed them to provide over \$12,000 in scholarships last year.

The EMPD contributed approximately 775 toys for the event, coordinated by EMPD Corporal and RHC Foundation President-Elect Jesus Rojas and the RHC Foundation Executive Director Jessica Hamman.

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“This event exemplifies the spirit of our community – coming together to spread holiday cheer and bring joy to deserving families,” said Board of Trustees President Oscar Valladares. “It is heartwarming to see so many individuals and organizations contribute to this effort, making a real difference in the lives of our student parents and their children. This event is a beautiful reminder of the strength and generosity of our Río Hondo College family.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS

RHC_HOLIDAYS1: Río Hondo College’s Basic Needs Center hosted its annual Holiday Toy Distribution, as student parents and their children enjoyed holiday crafts, movies, games and food as part of a festive celebration on Dec. 16.

RHC_HOLIDAYS2: Río Hondo College collected about 1,000 toys for the Basic Needs Center’s annual Holiday Toy Distribution, thanks to the generosity of the College staff and community partners, including the El Monte Police Department (EMPD) and National Latino Peace Officers Association’s (NLPOA) San Gabriel Valley Chapter. Student parents had an opportunity to select a toy for their child during the event on Dec. 16.

RHC_HOLIDAYS3: Río Hondo College student parents had a chance to select the perfect toy for their child during the Basic Needs Center’s annual Holiday Toy Distribution. More than 140 student parents and 385 children benefitted from the event on Dec. 16.

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