



Fontana Unified School District

Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities

9680 Citrus Avenue | Fontana, CA 92335 | Phone: (909) 357-5000 | www.fusd.net

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 27, 2024

CONTACT: Andrew Shortall

(909) 204-6013

Fontana Unified Brings Holiday Joy to Families through 27th Annual 'Fontana Santas' Toy Distribution

FONTANA, CA – Fontana Unified School District's (FUSD) headquarters parking lot once again transformed into a Southern California winter wonderland as it continued its tradition of spreading holiday cheer to local families in need during its 27th annual Fontana Santas toy distribution on Dec. 21.

For hours, a steady line of cars moved through the festive event picking up gifts of school supplies, food, books, and information on readily available community resources before lastly visiting Santa and Mrs. Claus, who handed out toys near their sleigh.

Volunteers of FUSD students, staff, and community members, including the entire Board of Education loaded each car up with gifts. For Elsie Avalos, who works in Maple Elementary School's health office, it was a chance for her family to give back to the community as she volunteered alongside her daughters Joanna and Isabella.

"I just love seeing the happy faces, it is wonderful we can do this together," said Elsie, whose daughter Isabella is a fifth-grader at Maple Elementary while Joanna graduated from Jurupa Hills High School in 2022 and currently attends Cal State San Bernardino. "We were counting the days until this event. I love when the girls come with me, they see there are those who are less fortunate out there, it's a reminder we are lucky with what we have."

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

Donations of toys and other essential items were collected throughout the Fontana Unified community for a month-and-a-half leading up to the event, with drop-off locations at the Fontana School Police Department and at all FUSD school campuses.

Fontana Santas dates to 1997 when Fontana School Police learned a Fontana boy ran away from home after Christmas because he did not receive any presents. Since then, the Fontana School Police Department and Fontana Unified Employees have collected toys and donations from local organizations and delivered them to students during the holidays, creating a treasured tradition that has provided toys to thousands of Fontana Unified students over the last 27 years.

– more –

“Fontana Santas is a day all of us at Fontana Unified have circled on our calendars every year,” Superintendent Miki R. Inbody said. “We cannot thank our staff, students, and community partners for making this celebration possible year after year. It is an event that not only spreads holiday cheer but reinforces our identity here at Fontana Unified, showcasing the incredible generosity and unity of our community.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

FUSD_FONTANA_SANTAS1: From left: Fontana Unified Board of Education President Adam Perez, Vice President Danielle Holley, Mrs. Claus, and Santa’s elf help spread holiday cheer at the District’s 27th annual Fontana Santas toy distribution event on Dec. 21.

FUSD_FONTANA_SANTAS2: Jaythan Armas, a Summit High School freshman enrolled in Fontana Unified’s law enforcement career technical education pathway, helps distribute gifts of donated books to families in need during the District’s Fontana Santas event on Dec. 21.

FUSD_FONTANA_SANTAS3: From left: Maple Elementary School health office staff member Elsie Avalos volunteers at Fontana Unified’s 27th annual Fontana Santas toy distribution event with her daughters Isabella Avalos, a Maple Elementary fifth-grader, and Joanna Alamilla, a 2022 Jurupa Hills High graduate, on Dec. 21.

###