

PRESS RELEASE

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Operation Santa Claus, Senior Santa & Friends Drives Kick Off the Holiday Season

*[Operation Santa Claus \(OSC\)](#) and [Senior Santa & Friends \(SSF\)](#) annual gift drives
are open through December 22, 2017*

Orange County, CA – The [Operation Santa Claus](#) and [Senior Santa & Friends](#) annual gift drives are currently collecting donations for children and seniors across the county, respectfully.



Operation Santa Claus, which began as a small effort to meet the needs of a handful of children in 1962, has become a major event for the community. This program provides gifts and toys to children who are in foster care in Orange County as well as to children of disadvantaged families who are receiving services from the County of Orange. Last year, Operation Santa Claus distributed over 39,000 toys/gifts to 18,000 children. This would not be possible without the generosity and collaborative effort of County of Orange employees, community based organizations, businesses, and individuals in the community who play an important role in collecting toys.

“Operation Santa Claus and Senior Santa and Friends help ensure that our most deserving youth and seniors in Orange County have a happier holiday season. The year round volunteers and generous donors truly help make these programs a success,” said Chairwoman Michelle Steel.

The Operation Santa Claus program is coordinated by the Orange County Social Services Agency (SSA) with support from community volunteers. Approximately 2,500 hours annually are donated by volunteers from County agencies and the community. These volunteers have been the backbone of Operation Santa Claus since its inception.

One such year-round Operation Santa Claus volunteer is Marge Miller. For the past 17 years, Ms. Miller volunteered her time putting together baskets for teenagers. "It truly is something that's in your heart. It's wonderful knowing that these presents are going to foster families who truly need and enjoy the gift baskets I put together."

In addition to Operation Santa Claus, SSA also runs Senior Santa & Friends. This program is geared toward providing gifts and special request items to low income elderly or severely disabled adults who are clients of SSA and/or the Orange County Health Care Agency.

Each year, SSA staff identifies clients who would benefit from having items such as household appliances, special medical equipment, nutritional supplements, or clothing. Items received through Senior Santa & Friends help to enhance quality of life, making life easier, more comfortable or more independent. Last year, Senior Santa & Friends provided almost 6,500 gifts to over 2,500 vulnerable seniors or disabled adults. This was largely due to the efforts of volunteers and donations received from County employees, private companies, community based organizations, and private individuals who donate to Senior Santa & Friends annually.



Residents of Orange County can take part by volunteering and/or donating to make Operation Santa Claus and Senior Santa & Friends by doing the following:

- Donate new and unwrapped toys at the collection boxes placed in many County buildings including every County Library throughout Orange County. In addition, Orange County residents may also drop off toys and other gifts at 1505 E. Warner Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92705. Email operationsantaclaus@ssa.ocgov.com regarding drop off times and locations.



- Orange County residents may also donate online at:
ssa.ocgov.com/volunteer/donations/osc_donation
ssa.ocgov.com/volunteer/donations/sr_santa_donation
- Angel tags can be displayed on trees, bulletin boards, walls, etc. Angel Tags provide gift suggestions for a senior or child in need of a gift from “Santa.” Requests may be emailed to senior.santa@ssa.ocgov.com or operationsantaclaus@ssa.ocgov.com

For more information about Operation Santa Claus, please call (714) 679-2438 or email OperationSantaClaus@ssa.ocgov.com.

And for more information about Senior Santa & Friends, please call (714) 825-3111 or e-mail Senior.Santa@ssa.ocgov.com

Video of Operation Santa Claus: <https://youtu.be/8g5aCpLu24Q>

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