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Weeble Words

The Newsletter of Santa-America

October 2009

Dear John,

Santa America's strategic focus on Autism was re-confirmed. US Health and Human Services announced that the incidence index of Autism has been revised from 1 in 150 children, to 1 in 91.....a 50% increase and serious news indeed. Please read the articles below for an update on Santa-America's breakthrough 2009 Pilot Program to bring Santa to children with Autism.



Also well covered by the press is the increasing casualty rate from Afghanistan and Iraq. Our Military Support Initiative is launching a 2009 pilot program for visits with Wounded Warriors and their families, Veterans Hospitals and USO facilities nationwide. Santa America **IS** the Santa leader in support of our warriors.....young and old. Santa will always remember their sacrifices. Airborne! Semper fil!

NOW is the time for action. Love, Hope and Joy wrapped in a big warm Santa hug!

This is **THE** most critical part of the year for Santa-America. 80% of our donations and funding occurs in the last 2 months of every year. As you know, every charity is scrambling for financial resources. **YOUR** personal support of Santa America and its special mission has never been more important. Check the donation button on our website and make a real difference in the life of a child.

I hope you enjoy Weeble Words! Please send me your thoughts and suggestions to make it even better!

Thank you for your support of Santa-America.

With Love, Hope and Joy 365 days a year!!

Love, Hope, and Joy,

Santa John Scheuch
Executive Director

From Santa Ernest (santaernest@santa-america.org)



YOUR Santa America is poised to reach yet

Santa Dennis Pollard Meets Ronald McDonald



A Santa who is a member of Santa America does not just sit

around waiting for a phone call that one of his special children needs a visit from him. Being "Santa" each day of the year means that we interact with all that we meet in the spirit of Love, Hope, and Joy. We need to be proactive in nurturing relationships with organizations and groups that take care of our children.

One such organization is the Ronald McDonald House in Gainesville, Florida. The Mission of the Ronald McDonald House is to provide temporary housing, basic amenities and support to families with critically ill children being treated at area medical facilities. Last fall, I made a phone call to the Ronald McDonald House in Gainesville, Florida, and offered to visit with the children and their families. There was a little reluctance for whatever reason by the house staff, initially, but a personal visit by Santa in October resulted in each Wednesday evening during the "season" being spent in the "House that Love Built." Because of those special evenings with the children, their families, and the House staff, reading stories, making cookies and gingerbread houses and listening to wishes from everyone, a very special relationship was formed that will be treasured for years to come. Santa will be there again each Wednesday night for many more "seasons" in the years ahead.

I was thrilled beyond words, when the House Manager, Theresa, called this past May and asked if I would be willing to make the journey from the North Pole for a "Christmas in July" event at the House. Another special guest would be none other than the one and only,

another level of loving support for special needs children and their families in 2009. Over 25 Santa America Santas have agreed to lead initiatives in their communities supporting children with autism or with a parent in Wounded Warrior Battalions and VA hospitals throughout the USA. Each location will be part of two 2009 Pilot Programs linking with our core mission to bring Love, Hope and Joy to special needs children and their families.

We continue to serve children in hospice or grief, children with chronic pediatric illness or children suffering from post traumatic stress disorder. This is our unchanging core commitment .

Within the core mission, we will develop national (and soon international) alliances focused on compelling special needs like autism and the families of wounded warriors or disabled veterans.. Within these special missions we will utilize the internet to communicate, train and evaluate our successes in serving special children and their families. We will do it all with an "open hand." As an example, Santa America regional conference and web based training is available to ALL Santas and Elves everywhere. With Santa America it is "about our children." It is always "Elf" before "Self."

Stay connected to our Santa America website for important updates on our mission and 2009 initiatives with autism and wounded warriors. Encourage your family, and friends on Facebook and Clausnet to visit and bookmark the Santa America website.....and sign up for "Weeble Words." We have set a goal of 1,000,000 (one million) visits to our website. We must get the word out on the inspired service you provide to children 365 days a year.

Remember, YOU are Santa America in your community!

With Love, Hope and Joy wrapped in a warm Santa hug!

Santa Ernest

From Santa John (santajohn@santa-america.org)

Much has happened since our last newsletter. I am totally focused on and committed to the success of our 2009 Autism Pilot initiative. To help support that effort, Elf Nita joins me in coordinating on-line training and Santa visits all over the USA!

Santa Ernest and Santa Dave Jordan are concentrating their efforts on the Military Support initiative. Santa Bob Elkins joins the team to lead a special internal fund raising initiative to help close the recession's financial shortfalls.

We are retaping portions of the Autism video based on early feedback from Santas and national experts in the world of Autism. The video is an important part of our 2009 Autism Pilot Program and will be used to help children who have not had a "Santa Experience" to be more comfortable when that time comes. The video and format for visits with Santa are real breakthroughs! Most children with autism (and their siblings) never get to visit Santa! In the first 2-3 months of 2010, the results of our visits will be reviewed for improvement and upgrade.....and an expansion to 60+ locations world wide! .

We have scheduled an on-line training session for Autism on October 26 at 9 pm Eastern, 8 Central, 7 Mountain, 6 Pacific. The response has been overwhelming and we have filled the 50 available spaces. We WILL schedule a second session before mid-November, AND an invitation only

Ronald McDonald, himself! I did not hesitate for a second in accepting the invitation and a chance to visit the wonderful children staying at the House. I also invited two of my Elves, Elf Andrew and Elf Moe to join me as well as two special guests, Omar and his Grandmother, Helen. Omar is a very special boy who I have been visiting with since March. His mother, Lizbett has since had her second heart transplant but is still hospitalized with post-operative complications. Omar and his family stayed at the House earlier this year.

I get chills every time I walk into the House, and this time was no different. Special volunteers had decorated the house for "Christmas" and others had wrapped so many presents! And all the Hugs! There was so much Love in the House that day, more than the usual amount. I met several new children and their families and had a very special moment when I was re-united with Emily. I had met Emily, her sister Skylar, and her mother Theresa at Christmas time while Emily was undergoing evaluation for cancer. But this day was most joyous because Emily had just finished her last chemotherapy treatment earlier that morning. Despite being pretty tired she didn't want to miss seeing Ronald McDonald and me.

Ronald McDonald is as wonderful and fun as you could imagine. We acted as old friends though this was our first meeting. We posed for as many pictures as everyone wanted to take, and watched the children open their gifts that were handed out by Elf Andrew. Lunch was what else? Happy Meals! Afterwards, we all had the chance to meet Magic, a miniature horse and a very special therapy animal. More pictures were taken with Ronald and his special three-wheeled car. Finally I gave a special show about my Reindeer resulting in each child (and Ronald) being presented with a certificate giving them the title of "Stable Elf."

The time spent that day with the children at the Ronald McDonald House is one of the highlights of my summer. Theresa, the House Manager, told me as I was leaving that it may have been the only time that Ronald McDonald had been upstaged! "The House that Love Built" is not just a slogan, it is a fact that lives and grows each day with the children, families, staff, volunteers, and all who enter the door. If you have not had the chance to do so, please, please, take a few moments, put on your "best Santa casual" and go make a visit to your local Ronald McDonald House, and meet the House Manager. You will have very few experiences ever like it and who knows, you might have a chance to meet Ronald McDonald one day!

THANK

"Graduate level" course for Santas participating in pilot visits. The repeat of basic training course is also FREE, but limited 50 per session. This will also be a chance to try out some new web based training technology.

Santa America is also focused on pursuing grants from foundations and businesses that support children. If you have connections to a company or a foundation, please let me know asap! Our wonderful continuing relationship with Jewelers For Children Foundation and our current grant submission pending with Hasboro Toys came as a direct of a Santa America Santa alerting our team.....it works!

Thank **YOU** for being a part of our wonderful organization.....**OUR** Santa America!

We look forward to a super season serving very special children and their families!

If you have questions or comments, please write me at santajohn@santa-america.org. There will be a **short** newsletter in both November and December.

Love, Hope, and Joy wrapped in a hug 365 days a year,

Santa John

From Elf Nita (elfnita@santa-america.org)



WHAT !!!!!!! It can't be the end of October!... it's still in the high 70's with 80 percent humidity down here (I guess you've picked up on my negative obsession with hot weather!!) along the Gulf Coast. I had the pleasure of spending July and most of August in the Milwaukee area and I was in Heaven, let me tell you. No HUMIDITY!!!!

But alas, the calendar says it's so. The lazy days of summer are "fini" and its time for action!! War Eagle!! (Auburn University battle cry!!)

!The year so far has seen a steady stream of potential new volunteer inquiries about Santa-America with most successfully completing the application process and becoming compliant. Several new Santa's have already been out doing our good work since completing their folders. Many of our brand new Santas met us in Gatlinburg last March at "Celebrate Santa."

As we enter the Holiday season, I am joining Santa John in scheduling both on-line autism training and Santa autism visits. Our 2009 Autism Pilot Program is one of our most important priorities, but rest assured, I continue to be your contact for volunteers applications!

Remember, as you begin your Holiday "visits" please take time to document your stories, take pictures and send them to Santa John (me, too) so that we can share them in "Weeble Words". Those stories are great to spread the good news and works of Santa-America to both prospective Santas and the world!! Also, don't forget when you are planning your activities to try and include some fund raising in the name of Santa-America. Christmas Tree farms where you can appear, breakfast with Santa where a restaurant makes a donation to Santa-America are a great way to raise funds for SA, and it also gets our name out in front of many people who might not know about us.....or YOU!. And, the funds you raise in your community come back to you in books, "HUGS", etc. to share with those very special children in your home town. You know your community best, and I'm sure you can be very creative in thinking of ways to help raise funds for our organization. Do call if I can be of any help with anything you are trying to accomplish, be it fundraising, compliancy or if you just need to chat.

My best to you all as we enter the Holiday Season, may you be blessed

YOU!!

On August 15 Santa Richard Farhat of Marietta, GA presented Santa-America training on working with children and families dealing with Autism. He was assisted by someone from the Autism Society of America. Richard's presentation was well received and we have had many positive comments about it. **Thank you Richard**

Santa John had the opportunity to be interviewed by Richard Law, a lawyer in Chicago and be the subject of his Blog in September.. To read the posting, use this link [here](#) . The dates are September 2 and September 9. **Thanks Rick.**

Santa-America is also the subject of an upcoming Podcast with Mrs. Claus, Bernadette Dimitrov. The podcast will be on her [Family Yak Channel](#). Date to be announced. **Thank you Mrs. Claus.**

REMINDER Important Announcement!!!

Santa-America announces a new route of entry into Santa-America. If you work with a hospital or pediatric organization and they administer a background check, a TB test, and HIIIPA training, please submit your application along with the contact information for the agency you are working with, including the volunteer coordinator. Elf Nita will then process your application.

We look forward to welcoming you to Santa-America.

REMINDER HELP PLEASE!!!

If you are member of a civic or charitable

with good health and spirit to do the things to help those we serve.

With Love, Hope and Joy.....

Elf Nita

Our Alliance Partner



Autism Society of America.
improving the lives of all affected by autism

[Visit](#)

[them here!](#)

Wounded Warriors by Dave Jordan



Santa-America salutes the Warrior Transition Battalion, recovering warriors and their families at Ft. Gordon with a day of "Fun in the Sun"

Friday 7 August was a busy day for Santa Bob King and his "Elf" Dave Jordan as they continued to spread the Santa-America message of "Love, Hope and Joy and to convey our thanks for their sacrifices to all our military family at the Ft. Gordon, Georgia and the Eisenhower Medical Center.

Santa Bob was kept busy judging games, awarding prizes, correcting "naughty behavior", accepting early present request lists, and generally attempting to stay cool enough to not pass out in the heat that was on the plus side of 90 degrees.

The troops were kidding both Santa Bob and his rather large Elf that the heat would prepare them for the much larger task to come.....A Holiday visit to the "sand box"...(oh joy...we can hardly wait!!)

The troops and their families were all active duty personnel stationed at Ft. Gordon or recovering wounded troops returning from the war zones and preparing to either transition back to active duty units or be medically discharged from the service.



We don't have a lot of pictures at this time since the gentleman who took them has been on emergency leave due to a family death. The pictures should be available for the next "Weeble Words." I have included three pictures from my camera showing Santa Bob and "Big Elf", Santa Bob counseling an Army doctor as to the acceptable behavior expected from Army Medical Personnel, and finally, Santa Bob, "Big Elf", and Ms. Laurie Ott.

organization in your community, please contact Elf Nita to let her know. These organizations can be a wonderful source of funding for Santa-America. We will be updating the application to include this requested information.

REMINDER Fund Raising and You



Santa-America operates entirely on

donations. Some of these come from large foundations and companies. But most come from average folks in amounts of \$50 or less. How does this apply to you?

We need your help, **locally** in soliciting funds from your local Rotary, Lions, Elks, or other service organization you may belong to. Offer to speak to the group about your work with special children and the mission of Santa-America. There are tools and presentations on the website for you to use. ([click here for those resources](#))

Other options include a raffle for a free Santa visit. You can get printable raffle tickets at an office supply store. Print these and sell at \$5 each, 6 for \$25. Winner of the drawing gets a home visit from Santa for up to 12 children. The donations would be tax deductible. ([click here for link to blanks](#))

Do you know of any businesses, including your place of employment, that make donations to charity? Do you have connections to

Ms. Ott is a great American Patriot and supporter of all our military. Laurie is the person we can thank for getting Santa-America connected to the folks at the military post, VA hospital, and Fisher House thus helping with Santa-America's military outreach.

Santa-America is looking forward to a long and mutually beneficial relationship with Laurie and the organization of which she is the Executive Director...The CSRA Wounded Warrior Care Project.
www.csrawwcp.org

Santa Bob will be working with Ft. Gordon's WTB, the Eisenhower Medical Center, and the Fisher House in the coming Holiday Season and throughout the years to come. Santa Bob, as well as Santa/Big Elf Dave welcomes any Santa, Elf, Mrs. Claus, or helpers who would like to help out in any way.

In closing, I'd like to say that words cannot adequately express what a great feeling it was for both Santa Bob and me to have an opportunity to board a bus full of wounded warriors and be able to say "thank you for your and your family's sacrifices and service that make it possible for all of us to remain free".

The positive attitudes we experienced from these troops and their families are remarkable considering their injuries... both physical and mental !

Always remember...."**FREEDOM IS NOT FREE**"

Please help us with this outreach in any way you can.

Santa Dave Jordan
National Director of Military Programs

Santa

Dave and Mrs.Claus
SPECIAL NOTE:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the support that Nona and I received during the recent hospitalization and death of our son Shane. Your prayers have really helped us through this rough time and I would ask that you continue to give us the best possible gift....your prayerful thoughts.

I would also like to ask that the Santas who have expressed a desire to help with our military outreach program and have heard nothing from me please continue to have patience with me. Shane was hospitalized the day after our Ft. Gordon event and I've not been able to get anything (make a living or Santa-America work) done until now.

I will be in touch within the next two weeks.....I PROMISE !!!!!

In LOVE, HOPE, and JOY

Santa Dave

Santa Dave Jordan
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any national company that makes charitable contributions?

We also have HUGS and books for sale for your "leave behinds" when you visit children and families. HUGS are \$6 each, An Angel in the Sky books are \$10 each. Please stock up now.

How does fundraising benefit you? 80% of all funds attributable to you are credited to you. For example, If you raise or send in \$100, you get credit for \$80 to be spent on Santa-America items (HUGS, books, brochures, etc. for you to use in your community). The other 20% is used to support the organization overhead (newsletters, internet, website, etc.).

So please, help us with your financial support as well.



Donate Now

Santa-America survives based on donations. These donations are used to cover the cost of giveaways (HUGS, books, pins, etc.). Please consider purchasing your supplies for the upcoming season early. This will help us through the "desert" of slow donations in the summer months. Go to www.santa-america.org for details.

See our list of items available. We are adding more all the time.

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