



The Children's
Christmas Party
of Jacksonville

Media Advisory

For Immediate Release

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THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY OF JACKSONVILLE ANNOUNCES A CHANGE OF PLAN FOR DISTRIBUTING TOYS IN 2021

Jacksonville, FL – Sept. 27, 2021 – In response to the continued risk posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Children's Christmas Party of Jacksonville today announced their plan for distributing toys to children in the Jacksonville area this December. Rather than hosting its traditional, in-person, community Christmas Party at the Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center, this local non-profit organization will instead partner with several pre-selected non-profit organizations to distribute toys to the children-in-need who are currently enrolled in those organizations' programs.

"This is our 23rd year to be giving toys to Jacksonville's children who might not otherwise receive toys for the holiday season. More than ever, we are committed to fulfilling our mission by providing toys to children-in-need for Christmas, especially this year, when so many children come from families who are facing challenges of all kinds because of the continuation of the COVID pandemic," said Diane Halverson, the executive director of The Children's Christmas Party of Jacksonville. "After witnessing the effects of the more transmissible delta variant the past couple months and also hearing the news that children won't have the opportunity to be vaccinated until possibly late in the year, we decided to be cautious and commit to protecting the children, their families, our volunteers and the community from the risks of this virus.

"To achieve both of these goals and fulfill our mission, our Board made the best decision possible, which is to provide toys safely through the programs of several other pre-selected non-profit organizations so the approximately 5,000 children-in-need who participate in those programs receive toys this year. We wish we could celebrate Christmas by holding our big event with thousands of Jacksonville's families coming together at the convention center in downtown Jacksonville. However, this alternative method of toy distribution by our charity was a needed compromise in another year of experiencing a public health crisis.

"We distributed toys in this way last year, and were able to provide toys to more than 5,000 children, which was more than we served the previous year. Of course we would rather host an in-person event and see the children's smiling faces as they select their toys, but last year showed us that this distribution method definitely helps achieve our mission.

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“We are able to provide these toys because of the very generous contributions of our sponsors and donors and it is with continued support for this year’s toy giveaway efforts that we will be able to provide toys to many of Jacksonville’s children this December.

“We look forward to hosting our traditional, in-person, Christmas party again in December 2022.”

About The Children’s Christmas Party of Jacksonville:

The Children’s Christmas Party of Jacksonville, a non-profit organization, was founded in December, 1999, by Travis and Margaret Storey with the mission of providing toys for Jacksonville’s children who otherwise might not receive toys for the holiday season. It is our hope in this, our 23rd year, to collect enough funds to purchase at least 15,000 toys and to give the toys to each of the approximately 5,000 children in as safe a method as possible through selected programs in which the children currently participate.

In 2019, which was a normal year, our one day event was held just before Christmas on a first come, first serve basis with a long, in-person wait line. We gave several toys to each of the 4,000 children-in-need who attended the event at the Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center in downtown Jacksonville. Santa Claus, musical groups and other special guests helped make the party a fun filled experience. Volunteer employees from our generous sponsors gave their time and effort to fill the convention center with toys and then hand them out on party day. During most years, there were up to 10,000 people who either attended or who were involved with the event during the three hour party.

For more information or to donate to The Children’s Christmas Party of Jacksonville, visit the organization’s Web site at www.ccpoj.org or send e-mail to: christmaspartyofjax@comcast.net.