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Town of Palm Beach United Way launches 33rd Annual Holiday Toy Drive to benefit local children and families

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Contact: Aleese Grittner, 561-655-1919; aleesegrittner@palmbeachunitedway.org

PALM BEACH, FL – A new, unwrapped toy or monetary donation can make a meaningful difference for a local family this holiday season. The Town of Palm Beach United Way is inviting the community to take part in its 33rd Annual Holiday Toy Drive, November 8 through December 6, to help provide gifts for children whose families may otherwise struggle to afford them. Donations will benefit children and families served by five local nonprofit organizations throughout Palm Beach County, helping parents share in the excitement of the holidays and ensuring children have something special to open.

"As the holiday season approaches, I am reminded that every child deserves to experience the excitement and joy of the holidays," said **Kim Goodwin**, General Campaign Chair for Town of Palm Beach United Way. "For families facing financial challenges, something as simple as receiving a gift can mean so much more than what is inside the wrapping. It is a reminder that they are not forgotten. Through the generosity of our Palm Beach community, we can help make the season brighter for hundreds of children and families. I encourage everyone to join us in making that possible."

This year's Toy Drive will benefit children and families served by Achievement Centers for Children & Families, The Fuller Center, The Glades Initiative, Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County, and Wounded Veterans Relief Fund. Together, these organizations support families throughout Palm Beach County, including low-income households, children in early learning and after-school programs, families in the Glades, and children of veterans experiencing financial hardship.

Achievement Centers for Children & Families anticipates providing gifts to approximately 550 children through its annual Santa Shop, where parents can select presents for their own children at no cost. The organization's gymnasium is transformed into a Winter Wonderland, with donated toys organized by age group. Volunteers help parents shop and wrap gifts, and childcare is available for children who attend. Monetary donations help purchase additional toys and books, particularly for age groups that may be underrepresented in toy donations.

"For many of our families, the holidays are one of the hardest times of year financially," said Gina Griffin, Director of Development for Achievement Centers for Children & Families. "Parents are working hard to cover everyday expenses, and gifts for their children are often the first thing to go when money is tight. Our Santa Shop gives parents the opportunity to choose and give presents themselves, while ensuring their children have something special to open during the holidays. It is a meaningful experience for the entire family."

The need is especially significant for families whose household budgets are often consumed by necessities such as housing, food, utilities, transportation, and childcare. At The Fuller Center, approximately 99% of the children served come from low-income households. The organization anticipates providing holiday gifts to more than 600 children, from infants through age 18.

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PLEASE REMEMBER US IN YOUR ESTATE PLANS AND LET US KNOW SO WE CAN SAY THANK YOU.

"For many parents, providing holiday gifts is simply not possible after covering the cost of everyday necessities," said Eric Roby, Chief Executive Officer of The Fuller Center. "A donated gift may seem like a small thing, but it can mean the world to a child who might otherwise go without. It also gives parents the chance to share in the excitement of the holidays without the added financial strain. These gifts help create special memories for children and remind families that their community cares."

The Glades Initiative anticipates reaching approximately 500 children from 200 families in the Glades communities, prioritizing households experiencing the greatest financial need. The Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County will distribute gifts to approximately 50 children, ages 3 to 15, and 15 adult students participating in its family education programs in Belle Glade, Pahokee, South Bay, and Delray Beach. Wounded Veterans Relief Fund expects to assist more than 40 veteran families, providing gifts to children of wounded and disabled veterans facing financial hardship.

Toy Drop-Off Locations

New, unwrapped toys can be dropped off November 8 through December 6 at the following locations:

- **Town of Palm Beach United Way:** 44 Cocoanut Row, Suite M201, Palm Beach (valet drop-off available at The Palm Beach Towers)
- **Capehart Photography:** 234 South County Road, Palm Beach
- **Findlay Galleries:** 165 Worth Avenue, Palm Beach
- **North Fire Station:** 300 North County Road, Palm Beach
- **Central Fire Station:** 355 South County Road, Palm Beach
- **South Fire Station:** 2185 South Ocean Boulevard, Palm Beach

Monetary donations are also welcome and can be made by phone at 561-655-1919, online at www.palmbeachunitedway.org/toy-drive, or by check payable to Town of Palm Beach United Way with "Toy Drive" in the memo. Checks can be mailed to 44 Cocoanut Row, Suite M201, Palm Beach, FL 33480.

A list of suggested age-appropriate gifts and additional information about the Toy Drive can be found at www.palmbeachunitedway.org/toy-drive.

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