

Weeble Words

The Newsletter of Santa-America

August 2009

Dear Jason,

Welcome to the second edition of the new **Weeble Words**. We have had a busy summer trying to raise the profile (and some funding) for Santa America.

I have been asked many times if the work of Santa-America is important. I would like to share an e-mail I received today. Judy is an autistic adult I have met.

I just spoke with Judy --- and she said that three people entered her heart at the conference: M, M, and Santa John.

This does not happen often.

I thought you should know that she thinks you are each very special.

My response:

Thank you for the very kind e-mail. Judy also holds a very special place in Santa's heart. She is one of the people I think of when the work gets difficult getting Santa involved with special children. I think of Judy and am reminded that it may be difficult, but it is important. And then I go back to work.

The work we do DOES matter. See the story to the right for proof.

If you have similar stories to share, please send them in. We will get them in future editions of Weeble Words.

I hope you enjoy this publication. Please send me your thoughts or comments to [Santa John](mailto:SantaJohn@Santa-America.org).

Thank you for your support of Santa-America.

Sincerely,



Santa John Scheuch
Executive Director

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



"When the going gets tough, the Velvet Elves get going!" Your Santa America is on the move, with some major national (and soon international) initiatives now well underway for 2009!

Santa America has joined with the Autism Society of America to sponsor joint fund raisers and individual Santa visits for children with autism and their families in 15-17 major locations around the USA. As Weeble Words goes to press, Santa



Santa George visits in Florida



I visited a young patient and parents spending about a half an hour talking to her and listening to all the activities she participates in. I brought her a stuffed animal, which she immediately named Spot, stands to reason it was a Dalmatian puppy with spots. I brought my Therapy Dog to the visit, his name is Griffin, the gentlest dog you would ever want. He is a kisser and a talker and will sit with a patient for several minutes as long as they are petting him. I was contacted in the evening by the Hospice Social worker who arranged the visit and she had come to the home shortly after I had left. She told me what a great visit we had and how much their daughter loved Santa visiting her house and could not wait to show the children in her school the pictures and the business

John Scheuch and Elf Helen are attending the national ASA Convention in Chicago, and we are matching ASA locations with Santa America Santas. Training is getting underway as Santa Richard Farhat and an ASA representative will be presenting special Santa autism training at the Brotherhood of the Direct Descendants of Santa, Santa Claus Academy being held near Atlanta, Georgia on August 15-16, 2009. Sign up for this program if you have not already done so. Special autism training for Santas will also be held at other locations to be announced. We will assess 2009 visits at pilot locations, incorporate the best techniques, and ramp up this initiative to 60+ locations in 2010!

See Santa John's article on the ASA convention and our national alliance in this edition of Weeble Words.

Santa Dave Jordan is leading our second national initiative to visit Wounded Warriors, their families, and staff at 5-6 battalion locations across the USA. We hope to ramp up this initiative to 15+ battalion locations in 2010. Santa Dave is designing a special Santa BDU (Battle Dress Uniform.....we called em "fatigues" in the 60's!!) with a Santa-America unit patch and even a Santa-America unit guide-on! Oh yes, Santas who participate in the pilot program will be presented with a special citation at the "Celebrate Santa" convention in Gatlinburg in 2010. This is all about putting Santa "boots on the ground" in support of our wounded heroes and their families as well as the staff who supports their recovery. See Santa Dave's article in this edition of Weeble Words for a report on our Wounded Warriors initiative. Santa Dave.....any special Santa "Jody Calls" planned?

As the economy tightens, Santa America is joining with our supporters to hold fund raisers and spread the message of Love, Hope and Joy! Our largest supporting foundation is Jewelers for Children. We are joining with their local members to hold holiday "Support Santa America" visits and photo events. We will be contacting you to schedule events as locations become finalized.

Remember, as part of our on-going mission, new Santas can now join Santa America by volunteering at your local hospital as well as hospice. You must be a fully documented and approved Santa America Santa to participate in our national programs. Contact Elf Nita now, if your volunteer folder lacks anything!

Santa America is THE largest volunteer Santa service organization in the USA. We have 300+ volunteers and are growing at the rate of 3-4 Santas a month! Your commitment makes our nation-wide impact possible.



card with my image on it. In my conversation with the parents I discovered that they had held a fund raiser to help meet some of the bills and had an incredible event. I asked if that was going to be repeated and they said yes, so I volunteered to bring my Santa chair and allow children, adults, senior citizens and animals to sit with Santa and of course bring the camera for pictures and if possible donate to help the family. I hope we could plan the event to take place over Christmas Season and they were very excited. Also the Parents told the Social Worker they hoped I would return, and of course I will.

THANK YOU!!



A huge Santa-America Thank You to Santa Bob Elkins and the Palm Tree Santas. This fine group of folks collected \$795 to benefit Santa-America.

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

This photo is your national staff signing the "Santa Oath" at last March's "Celebrate Santa" gathering. Your heart and personal commitment to bring Love, Hope and Joy to special children and their families, 365 days a year, makes our "Santa Oath" a reality; one child at a time.

Even more is happening!! The next issue of "Weeble Words" will have a report on our pilot clinical trial with cystic fibrosis children. Santa Leon Lane and the staff at the medical college of the University of South Alabama are engaged in this first ever pioneering study. Also, an update on the private navy of Santa America....."Team Reel Elves!" We have 2 donated fishing boats with Santa at the helm getting ready to take special needs children out for a very special day on the water!

With Love, Hope and Joy!
Santa Ernest

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

I thought the first 3 months were hectic! It continues to be exciting and a great honor to serve the children, Santas, and Mrs. Clauses of Santa-America. Since the last newsletter, Elf Helen and I have been to Chicago for the Autism Society of America's 40th Annual Convention. We had the chance to meet with some wonderful folks and did lots of networking (see ASA article).

The biggest challenge continues to be fund raising. I guess it always will be. That's the nature of not-for profit work. Most of the people we talk to understand and approve of the mission we are on, they just don't have the available funds right now. If you have connections to any foundation, corporation, or other potential donor to Santa-America, please let me know so we can followup with information. In the past two months, I have met with Picture People, Hallmark, Garmin, AMC Theaters, WalMart, and Sprint. We are submitting grants to foundations regularly.



We are working on the details of a "Shop Santa-America" web page. You will be able to purchase Santa-America and Santa Oath logo products. There is lots of "back end" work to make this happen, so please be patient.

Our next newsletter is set for October delivery. If you have an article or other information you would like presented, please send it to me. We are always looking for stories of your special visits.

If you have questions or comments, please write me at santajohn@santa-america.org. Please continue to have a great summer.

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

Santa John

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



Well, hello again everyone, here's hoping you are having a great summer. I'm spending most of mine up in wonderful, blissfully cool Wisconsin. We're sleeping with the windows open, can you imagine that in July!!!! You'll understand if you've ever been in the deep south in the months of July or August!!!! Hot and sticky for sure. Makes me a whiney person.

Things are relatively slow, as usual during the summer, but we have several

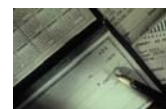
background check, a TB test, and HIPAA training, please submit your application along with the contact information for the agency you are working with, including the volunteer coordinator. Elf Nita will then process your application.

We look forward to welcoming you to Santa-America.

**REMINDER
HELP
PLEASE!!!**

If you are member of a civic or charitable 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.

Santa's making progress toward becoming compliant with Santa-America. We have found that some Hospice and Hospital groups do not have training sessions during the summer and that will slow the process down a bit if you are just getting started. Back to my same old song....there are still many of you that I don't have an application for, who have been doing the wonderful work of Santa-America for quite awhile. All I need from you is the application - the major tool I use to communicate with you and get your file started. It will contain much needed information...so, please if you haven't sent it to me and you are waiting to get on the map, that's why you're not there ---- no application!!!!

While things are "summer slow" you might consider making plans for any fundraising ideas in your community. As everyone is aware, this is a very difficult time for any non-profit organization. Any and all efforts that bring funds to Santa-America are vital at this point. Some suggestions for planning are "Breakfast with Santa" with a local family style restaurant, going to local service organization meeting (even if you are not a member) like Lion's Club, Rotary Inter., etc. to make a presentation about our wonderful group of Santa's and their work, and any business that would let you represent them in a program they have with a portion of all their proceeds going to Santa-America. Also, being a Santa at a Christmas Tree Farm for a percentage. All these things will need to be planned early. You know what's happening in your community - be creative!!! Remember that the funds you raise in your community come back to you in terms of books, "Hugs", etc. to use while visiting in your community. And as always, call if we can help in any way.

I hope you all have a great end to your summers, enjoying your families and great weather. Stay cool (big thing with me these days) and look forward to great fall and Christmas season for all.

With Love, Hope and Joy from,

Elf Nita

Our Alliance Partner



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

[them here!](#)

[Visit](#)

Autism Society of America Convention

Elf Helen and Santa John just returned from a great 4 days in Chicago meeting with the Autism Society of America. We were able to meet the entire staff, as well as many chapter members and officers from across the country. We were also able to learn much more about the special children and families we are working with.

The best news of all, they **REALLY** are excited about the work we are doing and the experience we are bringing to the children. The parents we talked to are thrilled to find that there are Santas that understand the special needs of their children. We are delivering the HOPE of a positive experience with Santa where, for many families, none has existed.

ASA is holding space in the December issue of the **Autism Advocate** for an article on preparing your child for meeting with Santa Claus. It will have a companion section on preparing Santa to meet your child. This magazine has a circulation of 60,000.

While there, we got to meet with representatives of Google, Easter Seals,

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 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,

many publishing companies, toy companies, Metropolitan Life, and AMC Theaters. We will be following up with each of these to see how we can create a positive working relationship with each of them.

A special thank you goes out to Santa David Hooper for his help in visiting the children and families at the convention. Dave delivered Love, Hope, and Joy in true Santa-America spirit.

Wounded Warriors by Dave Jordan



The Santa-America work with the Warrior Transition Battalions is progressing in a number of locations.

Since the last Weeble Words issue we have determined that the pilot programs will be located at six Army posts and one Marine base. These locations have been chosen by taking into consideration the availability of volunteer Santas and military unit cooperation.

Preliminary discussions have been held with Santas who have expressed interest in working with this program and are located near the military installation we have targeted.

The following list is tentative at this time but should have an active Santa working with them before the end of this year: If you can help at any of these locations, please let me know.

Ft. Riley, KS	US Army
Ft. Gordon, GA	US Army
Ft. Jackson, SC	US Army
Ft. Bragg, NC	US Army
Ft. Sam Houston, TX	US Army
Ft. Meade, MD	US Army
Camp Lejune, SC	USMC
MacDill AFB FL	USAF



Santa
Dave and Mrs. Claus

There are a total of 34 Warrior Transition Battalions and Units just in the Army and additional WTB's in the other military branches. Our decision to start with the Army and Marine Corps WTB's is based on the fact that, at this time, these branches have the most "boots on the ground" in the two major theaters of combat. There appears to be some inter-service cooperation in sending returning warriors to existing WTB's.

Santa-America's goal is to expand this program to every military branch and every location that is working with troops in transition. This effort can only be successful if we have enough Santas to make it happen.

I am working with Fort Gordon but am seeking a Santa who is closer to this

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.

Santa Oath and Santa-America UPDATE

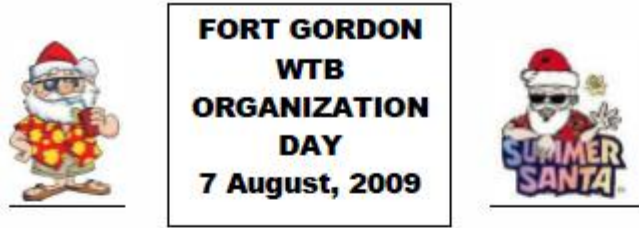
The author of the Santa Claus Oath, Phil Wenz, and Santa John met in Chicago on July 24 to discuss how we will get Oath memorabilia produced. Santa-America will be the official charity of the Santa Oath. We can't begin to express our thanks to Phil for this great honor. [Click Here for Oath details.](#) We will be developing some new Oath items together to help raise funds for Santa-America. Stay tuned for more details.



Autism Society of America Photos

post. Anyone who would be interested in helping should contact me.

The Fort Gordon program has been kicked off with a "Summer Santa" visit to their "Organizational



Come See Santa

(On Vacation from the North Pole)

BRING YOUR CAMERA

Pictures with Santa
and Kids of all ages

HAVE YOUR CHRISTMAS LIST

Get a early head start
on your Christmas Wishes

MEET SANTA
AT THE
DUNKING TANK

COME HELP SANTA JUDGE THE GAMES



Day".

This flyer shows some of the activities that Santa will participate in. I am writing this before the event but the next issue of "Weeble Words" will have pictures and a report on the day.

A "How to Get Started" document is currently being compiled and will be distributed to Santas who will be working with the various installations. This will include a list of names with points of contact, ideas on how to approach key personnel, ideas on activities to kick off the local program, etc.

Information will be included regarding organizations that currently serve our military such as the Fisher Houses, VA Hospitals, USO, Wounded Warrior Project, etc.

I would encourage the the Santa-America Santa to establish a relationship with these organizations because they have many resources that will be helpful in Santa-America getting started locally and you will find that these folks will be thrilled to learn of Santa-America and the work we do.

In closing, I would like to invite each and every Santa to consider participating in this program if you feel that you have the time and want to have a highly visible way to say "thank you" to our troops and their families for all the sacrifices they are making for us.

Remember...OUR FREEDOM IS NOT FREE and we have a unique opportunity to offer "LOVE, HOPE and JOY"

If any Santa is interested in volunteering for the "Santa-America Military



Santa John, Lee Grossman, President of ASA, Elf Helen



Santa-America Booth



Santa Dave with children in Respite Care

Santa Claus Academy to Train Santas on Autism



On August 15 from 9 am to 11 am, Santa Richard Farhat of Marietta, GA will be presenting Santa-America training on working with children and families dealing with Autism. He will be assisted by someone from the Autism Society of America.

If you are in the southeast, you might consider attending the session. For more information, please contact Gary Casey at gwc Casey@santaatlanta.com.

Outreach Program" or you would like additional information please contact me at: santadave@santa-america.org

or call (803) 327-9469

(Look for a big surprise in the next "Weeble Words")

In Love, Hope and Joy
Santa Dave

Santa Dave Jordan

ph: 803-327-9469

cell: 803-493-0711

email: santadave@santa-america.org

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.