

WEEBLE WORDS

Volume 1, Issue 1, November 2007



SYMBOLIC GIFTS

Santa-America is moving to symbolic gifts that represent Love, Hope and Joy. An initial "Santa-America Hug," a polar fleece scarf with mittens attached on the ends was created for home-based sewing volunteers. After premiering the product at the Round Bobbin Sewing Expo in St. Charles, MO, Santa-America identified modifications needed to enhance and upgrade the quality of our "Hug." We are now working to deliver 3,000 enhanced HUGS before year-end. We are developing a number of delivery sources (home sewers, offshore, disabled workshops) to ensure delivery of over 30,000 HUGS next year.



With special thanks to Santa Jim Pollard, Santa-America facilitated the publishing of "An Angel in the Sky," our special book that helps terminally ill children cope with dying. We anticipate the book will be ready for distribution before year end. We are working with our author to produce a similar Santa-specific book for printing in 2008/early 2009.

Santa-America will deliver 1,000 authentic "Santa Sleigh Bells" this year. These bells remind children to believe in the power of Santa and also serve as a safe "clinically clean" reminder of their special visit. We need 10,000 bells next year for our special children.

MEDICAL PILOT STUDY

Santa-America has begun a medical clinical pilot study entitled *Psychosocial Factors in Treatment of Children with Cystic Fibrosis*. There have been numerous studies evaluating the effects of spirituality in adult populations but none in juvenile. This study is evaluating the effect Santa Claus has on the physical and emotional well-being of children suffering from cystic fibrosis. This study, the first of its kind, has been approved by the University of South Alabama Medical School.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Symbolic Gifts	1
Medical Pilot Study	1
Message from the President	2
Santa Making News	2
Help the Elf	2
Elf Before Self	3
Santa Supports Sassy Survivors	3
Per Diem Policy	4
Believe! Art Show	4
Santa Resources	5
Accomplishments at a Glance	6

Santa-America, Inc.
308 Belrose Avenue
Daphne, AL 36526
Email: info@santa-america.org

A Message From the President

photo by Elizabeth McGonagle Graham

Santa Ernest L. Berger

Hello Fellow Santas and Elves! We just completed the 2007 "Angel Ride." Santa and Elf Elizabeth led over 4,000 motorcycles in this huge regional event that raised over \$200,000 to help chronically ill children. The event draws motorcycle enthusiasts from 7 states to ride in support of children and their families facing a "rough patch in the road." Santa visited 35 very special "Angel Ride Children" at the concert that followed the ride. It was the third annual visit with many of the children..... we have a special bond that many of you experience in your visits. The event is right at the heart of our mission of bringing Love, Hope and Joy wrapped in a huge Santa Hug to special children throughout the USA and six foreign countries.



With all the press and photo-ops of an event of this size, I am reminded that it's still "About Our Special Children," and all the "lights, camera and action" just comes along as part of what we do. Of course we love the attention, but as each of us begin the rush of the 2007 holidays,

keep the following in your heart... "IT'S ELF BEFORE SELF!" What makes a Santa-America volunteer so special is your commitment to the children and your ability to keep legitimate ego needs (Yes, we all are red velvet hams at heart!!) in perspective. We are only as effective as our last visit. For our hospice children, we may only get one chance to visit. The stakes are always high for us.....

May the Almighty protect and guide you in the weeks ahead and throughout 2008 as we continue to visit the special needs children of the world.

Santa-America no longer recommends giving candy canes to our children..... we encourage healthy snacks.

SANTA MAKING NEWS

We want to know your headlines! Santa Gary Casey was featured on the front page of the Living Section of the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* on November 2, 2007. Santa Gary bared his belly while he shared stories of his experiences.

Santa-America is a feature in the December issue of *Mobile Bay Monthly*. We are thrilled to have the support of this wonderful regional publication.

We would like to keep a scrapbook of your adventures, but you have to let us know about it! We'd also like your community to know of your involvement and support of Santa-America. Please share with us your local newspaper and reporter and we'll let them know of your involvement in Santa-America. Email your contacts to Elf Cathy at CathyBarnette@Santa-America.org.



Thanks Santa Leon Lane and Elf Gabby for supporting Santa-America at the Wharf (Orange Beach, AL)!

HELP THE ELF!



As you all know, Elf Nita is charged with the task of working with all Santa-America Santa's to complete the volunteer process. If Elf Nita hasn't already contacted you, she will. Nita is

making sure that each Santa has completed the Santa-America application. Nita is also looking for what type of training you received at your hospital or hospice, a certificate of completion and a copy of your background check. As we continue to grow, it is important for the North Pole to have a copy of all of this information. Once Nita has your information, look for a packet of goodies to be delivered as a way to say thanks.

ELF BEFORE SELF



Recently highlighted at the Georgia Independent School Association, the Santa-America “Elf Experience” is a community service program for high school juniors and seniors to accompany Santa as he visits children and families in hospice, with chronic pediatric illness or suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder throughout the year. Bayside Academy, (Daphne, Alabama) is the first school in the nation to launch a “Teen Elves” community service program. Bayside Academy Headmaster Tom Johnson shared his perspective on the importance of

the program. “This is a unique program for high school students to join Santa to deliver the unconditional gifts of Love, Hope and Joy to special need children 12 months a year. The Elf Program is a playful but serious way to instill the values of community service and build responsibility.” To learn more on building a program in your school, visit our website at www.santa-america.org, or contact Elf Cathy at 251.379.0462.

SANTA SUPPORTS SASSY SURVIVORS

Santa unveiled his new Breast Cancer Awareness Suit for the month of October. Designed by Amy Meek of Amy’s Announcements, the suit was created to remind women of the importance of Breast Cancer Self Exams and early detection. Unveiled in St. Charles, MO during the Round Bobbin Expo, Santa walked the runway during the Medical Society of Mobile County (AL) Fall Brunch and Fashion Show.

To conclude a host of Breast Cancer Awareness activities, Santa gathered with the Sassy Survivors to celebrate their show F.A.C.E.S. (Face All Cancer, Emerge with Strength) Show. They enjoyed a luncheon and were surprised to have a visit from Santa in his suit honoring survivors of breast cancer. The pink and white suit was handmade, and Santa doesn’t wear a hat when in this suit, to honor those who have lost their hair due to chemotherapy.



The survivors shown left to right are Bettie Bayer, Cathy Emmel, Michele Bringuier, Teresa Marshall, Barbara Gabel, Santa Ernest Berger, Joyce Shields, Fred Michaels, and Susan Wright. Those gathered here represent a total of 137 years of survivorship!

The Breast Cancer Suit will only be worn by Santa at events in support of breast cancer awareness or research. The suit will then travel with area Santas across America seeking sponsors to fund a suit to permanently remain in their location.

ELF BENEFITS

Selflessness.....better to give than to receive...

Responsibility...not a “one time” project

Leadership at a higher level

Commitment to value rich service: Love, Hope, Joy

Unites 3 generations in service

Builds relationships within community



BELIEVE!

TRAVELING ART SHOW

This year, amidst the hustle and bustle, stop and reflect about the true gifts of the season. Santa-America and the Eastern Shore Art Center (ESAC) have united to share with the community, Believe! Unveiled on December 7th (First Friday), area artists, including Carolyn Newcomer and Holly Irwin, are putting on canvas their interpretation of Santa and the gifts of Love, Hope and Joy. The Sassy Survivors from the recent F.A.C.E.S. show will submit their image of Santa and student artists from Bayside Academy and Spanish Fort Middle School will also be on display.

Please join us for a Celebration on December 6th from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. The evening will premiere the Believe! Art

Show and focus on give the gifts of Love, Hope and Joy. In addition to supporting children and families in crisis, your \$50/couple ticket will provide a picture with Santa, hors d'oeuvres and community fellowship. Tickets must be purchased in advance by calling Elf Nita at 251.923.7404 or Elf Cathy at 251.379.0462.

Santa's visit to children come from referrals in the medical community and hospice as well as from special needs educators.

Santa Bill Wells rides in the Loyal Order of the Fire Truck Parade. Right, Santa Dave Smith supports Make-A-Wish Foundation with StarWars StormTroopers.



SANTA AMERICA PER DIEM POLICY (Effective January 2008)

We are thrilled to watch the number of Santas grow throughout the country. We are grateful for your heart and compassion in serving our special children and their families. To help offset your costs, Santa-America has worked with the Internal Revenue Service to identify a per diem reimbursement policy. Although your time is valuable and we appreciate all visits on behalf of Santa America, not all visits as Santa qualify for the per diem reimbursement.

The visit must be pre-scheduled by a local hospice, doctor, social worker or special needs educator and occur with children and/or their siblings on whom information has been gathered. Visits for Santa America clinical trials qualify for the per diem. Public relations events may qualify for per diem if assigned by Santa America.

A detailed documented Santa Visit report must be completed and submitted within 30 days of visit. We are working to make this form available to complete online.

Daily reimbursements are \$50.00. Overnight visits are reimbursable at the amount of \$120.00. In every case, other children and families may be involved. Each per diem includes visits per day not per case.

SANTA RESOURCES

Santa-America has a number of new tools available to you! In addition to the first edition of the Santa-America Volunteer Sleigh Kit, we also have stickers and a beautiful new brochure. The Sleigh Kit and Brochure can be downloaded from the website at www.Santa-America.org or by emailing the North Pole with a request. Please let us know of the special events you are participating in so we can send you weeble stickers.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!



For Santa-America to continue to grow, individuals, business, and local communities need to know of our special work... and **you are the local face!** Santa-America encourages those who are comfortable speaking in front of groups to work with their local chamber of commerce to find avenues to “be the face of Santa-America.” Santa-America can work with you to develop the proper presentation for the audience, etc.

Area events are an effective way to let the community know about Santa-America and the role you play in the community. Special events are an effective method to help support Santa-America and raise awareness.

What can you do?

Contact your local chamber of commerce and let them know about Santa-America. Identify local service clubs like the Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, Lions Club, etc. and ask them to support Santa-America. Host a Santa-America Santa Breakfast to help offset the cost of your special gifts. Contact Elf Cathy for more information.

IN THE SLEIGH

Santa Ernest Berger, President. Santa Ernest is excited about the holiday season and continues to provide visits to families. Santa Ernest enjoys supporting area charity events while spreading the word on Santa-America. Santa Ernest can be emailed at SantaErnest@Santa-America.org or by calling 251.626.6609.

Elf Cathy, Executive Director. Elf Cathy has been busy this year drafting policies and plans, as well as defining and broadening our community impact. Elf Cathy can be reached by emailing CathyBarnette@Santa-America.org or by calling 251.379.0462.

Elf Nita, Administrative Director. Our newest addition to the sleigh, Elf Nita aka Nita Mickwee is aboard to help process volunteer applications, coordinate with your local hospice and assist in the nuts and bolt details of our operations. You can reach Nita at ElfNita@santa-america.org or by calling 251.923.7404.

Elf Jason, Webmaster and Technical Guru. Elf Jason is our go-to-guy! Jason donates his time to create and maintain the Santa-America website as well as field calls on all technical matters from Santa.



SANTA TO DO'S

Send the name and contact information of a local paper and reporter. We'll send them a note about your involvement with Santa-America.

Contact Santa-America for your e-copy of the Santa-America Volunteer Sleigh Kit.

Identify a venue for the Santa-America traveling art show. Contact Elf Cathy or Elf Nita to schedule the exhibit in your area.

Share with elected officials your special visits and the work of Santa-America. Elf Cathy and Elf Nita are ready to support you as needed.

Santa-America is member of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

2007 ACCOMPLISHMENTS-AT-A-GLANCE

Santa-America has significantly revamped its website to improve content and usability. Our website statistics have increased from an average of 300 visits per month in January 2007 to over 500 new visitors per week.



There is unlimited community upside in supporting of Santa-America. We are working to create working relationships with our local Santas and elected officials (local, state and federal) to engage them in support of our special mission. Santa-America was highlighted in Washington, DC at the National League of Cities Conference earlier this year.

Santa-America is creating 2 training DVD's on the topics of pediatric death and bereavement and pediatric post-traumatic stress. These DVD's will be available to our Santas to build on their local hospice based training with specialized pediatric focused training.

Santa-America has grown to almost 300 dedicated Santas, Mrs. Claus and Elves in 44 states and 6 foreign countries.

Santa-America Child Abuse Prevention Committee...Santa-America is the national leader in NCQA background checks (the same as a doctor and nurse). Our children are our utmost priority. Santa-America has a zero tolerance for any volunteer with a history of child abuse. In July 2007, the Santa-America Board of Advisors formed a special committee to review our procedures and create policies to take every practical step to ensure the utmost safety of our children and our volunteers.

Weight Loss Reduction...Santa-America has initiated a program to reduce the size of Santa by 25% in the next 15 years. In addition to being a major cause of Santa disability and early dying, obesity is a national epidemic with 19% of our children suffering from extreme weight issues. We will host a "weigh-in" during the 2008 Discover Santa-Convention to formally track our Santa's weight loss.



Love, Hope & Joy
Wrapped in a Warm Santa Hug
for Special Children & their Families
365 Days A Year!