

1,500 Toys

VFW Post gifts goodies to area school children

Jan 31, 2020

Students in the Garfield, N.J., school district were in for a treat at Christmastime thanks to VFW Post 2867 in Garfield. Pre-k, kindergarten and first-grade students had the opportunity to meet Santa and Mrs. Claus at the Post home. Each child walked away with a gift and a tummy full of snacks.

Post Commander Irwin Wasserman said this was the Post's third year doing this community event, and he expects to see it continue.

"This time was different than previous years because we had the event at the Post rather than going into the schools," Wasserman said. "We had juice, protein bars, cookies and candy. And if the little ones brought siblings, we had plenty for everyone."

Wasserman, a Korean War vet, said he is proud to say that 13 schools are served by this program. Middle and high school students as well as teachers came to the Post in advance to wrap 1,500 toys for distribution.

In addition to a toy drive with boxes set up at local businesses and high schools, the Post purchased \$4,000 worth of toys. Wasserman said the local Five Below store gave him a discount and also sent the Post a percentage of the sales.

The Post sponsors a casino night in September which pays for the bulk of the out-of-pocket expenses for the Christmas event.

Wasserman said that eight years ago, the Post had no funds and the building was in bad shape and they were set to close. Members persevered and turned things around.

"Rentals are great and we do three or four wedding receptions a year," Wasserman said. "We are a Post committed to our community. We have a bus that we use to transport folks to doctor's appointments. When the city bus broke down, it borrowed our bus."

VFW members have an active presence in the schools as well. Veterans go into the

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classrooms to speak about their individual military experiences. Likewise, students are invited to the post for different events.

“There’s always something going on at our Post,” Wasserman said. “And we get a lot of support from the people of Garfield.”