



Holiday Wrap Up

Van Buren Center

What an incredible holiday season it was at the Van Buren Center! We are in awe of the holiday generosity. Our community continues to amaze and inspire us with the incredible response and support we receive each year. From the individuals, groups, and organizations that donated thousands of toys for our Santa's Workshop, essential winter items, and meals this holiday.

Our biggest holiday event is **Santa's Workshop**. For 8-days straight, a space in our shelter is transformed and filled with toys and gifts for our families. Volunteers help parents pick out gifts for each of their children and then wrap them. This year was one of our busiest and most impactful years with the number of families we serve.

For our guests, the holidays can be a difficult and lonely time of year, and that is why it is our mission to make sure they feel included, loved, and have a reason to feel joy. **98 families** participated in this year's workshop and **207 children** received a magical and special holiday. Each child received 5 special gifts, a coloring book and crayons, unlimited books, a stuffed animal, and a stocking stuffer filled with toys.

Thank you to everyone who volunteered, donated, and gave their support this holiday season!

Click the link below to watch a virtual tour of the workshop from this year!





Santa's Workshop

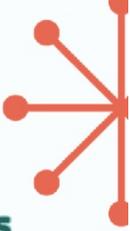


[Click Here to Watch Video](#)

1,656
toys provided

142
volunteers



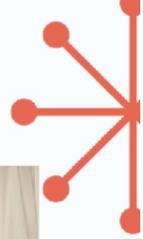


Santa's Workshop Volunteers



Volunteer Elves

Santa's Workshop is truly a community event. The workshop is run completely by volunteers. **142 volunteers** gave their time, talent, and heart to make the workshop a huge success. Ohio Health, Victoria's Secret & Co., YMCA of Central Ohio People and Culture team and Grants team, and the Brandi N. Milbry Foundation were some of the amazing organizations that participated this year as well as countless families and individuals. Together they wrapped over a thousand gifts and helped parents pick out special gifts for each of their children.





Holiday Toy Drive

Our Santa's Workshop would not be possible without the incredible support we receive from the community. We love this time of year because we get to work together with so many groups and people from the community who want to make a difference through acts of kindness and service. This year we got a special visit from **COTA**. They hosted a toy drive for the workshop and surprised us with their holiday bus when they stopped by to drop off toys. Another highlight from this year was when the **Buck-I-Guy** stopped by to spread holiday cheer to the Van Buren staff while also providing toys for the

workshop. There are so many groups to thank and we can't thank you all enough for the impact you made.

The toys that we have left over from this year will be used in our Success Store, which is a part of our volunteer incentive program for guests at the shelter. Kids at Van Buren are able to pick out toys and other items available in the store when they volunteer to help around the shelter.





Keep Warm Kits

Seeds of Caring provided our shelter guests with **400 Keep Warm Kits**. During the event, **185 kids** worked together to make **200 comfort scarves** that went into the kits. All of the contents for the kits were generously provided by the **Center for Human Kindness**.

With the winter weather and dropping temperatures, having these Keep Warm Kits to provide to our guests at Van Buren has been so important and impactful. Thank you, Seeds of Caring for your support and the incredible impact you make in our community!

[Learn More](#)



Pictures with Santa



Pictures with Santa is such a special event for our families at Van Buren. For the 4th year, Edith Johnson, Service Director for Van Buren, and her husband have volunteered as our Santa and Mrs. Claus. The event is made possible by **Performance Chrysler Jeep Dodge Ram Georgesville** who donated over 200 special gifts for our children to receive during the event. **103 children and 38 families** attended the event. Families got to have their picture taken with Santa and Mrs. Claus and received a framed copy of the picture. In addition, volunteers from the **OSU Wexner Medical Center: Inpatient Hospital Activation** team passed out snacks and did crafts with the kids.





THANK YOU!



URGENT NEED

LARGE-SIZED ADULT WINTER COATS

The Van Buren Center provides emergency shelter to 800 individuals each night. **We are in urgent need of XL, 2X, 3X, 4X, and 5X adult winter coats.** Currently, we have coats for children and adults in sizes S, M, and L and do not need those at this time.

If you would like to donate adult coats in sizes XL, 2X, 3X, 4X, and 5X please email **vbvolunteer@ymcacolumbus.org** to coordinate your donation.

[Amazon Wish List](#)



YMCA VAN BUREN CENTER
SHELTER SERVICES

595 Van Buren Drive • (614) 689-2020
ymcacolumbus.org/locations/vanburen

Connect with us.

YMCA of Central Ohio Shelter Services | 595 Van Buren Dr., Columbus, OH 43223

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