

TOYS FOR TOTS IS UNDERWAY

For Release

November 17, 2020

The Prince William County Fire & Rescue System has begun collecting toys for the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Foundation. This year's event will run through **December 12, 2020**.

Toys for Tots is a national charity program run by the United States Marine Corps Reserve. Toys are collected and distributed to less fortunate children whose parents may be struggling financially and unable to purchase gifts during the traditional Christmas Holiday Season. It is the only charitable endeavor associated with the Department of Defense that reaches out to local communities. The program was started in 1947, in California, by Major William L. Hendricks and was inspired by his wife, Diane, when she tried to donate a doll to a needy child but could not find an organization to do so. At Diane's suggestion, Major Hendricks gathered a group of local Marine reservists who coordinated and collected 5,000 toys for local children. Hendricks used his position as director of public relations at Warner Brothers Studio to enlist celebrity support and later asked his friend, Walt Disney, to design a poster for a national campaign. The result was the three-car, red train logo.

Please drop off your *new* and *unwrapped* toy at any Prince William County, City of Manassas Park or Manassas City fire station, Prince William County Public Safety Training Center in Nokesville as well as the lobby at the McCoart Government Center in Woodbridge. Please follow the drop off instructions listed below:

- Enclose the items in a white or clear trash bag. On the outside of the bag, mark the number of items enclosed.
- Due to COVID-19, visitors will not be granted access to enter the stations. Upon your arrival, please ring the doorbell and leave your bagged donations outside the door. Station personnel will retrieve the bags.
- *Clothes and used toys cannot be accepted.* Please consider donating used toys and clothing to churches and shelters in your neighborhood.
- If you prefer to make a monetary donation, in lieu of purchasing a toy, please visit https://marinetoysoftots.salsalabs.org/localdonationform/index.html?fun_local_campaign_designation=VA-Quantico&scf_unit_code_supporter=VA-Quantico.

All toys will be delivered to the Toys for Tots collection site for processing and delivery to pre-authorized organizations who have requested toys. Fire stations are not permitted to deliver toys directly to citizens.