

# Fill the bus donations brighten holidays for nearly 100 area children

With buses and cruisers overflowing, members of Neighborhoods United and the New Bedford Police Department distributed toys to about 100 area children this holiday season as the conclusion to the seventh annual Safe Zones Fill the Bus Toy Drive.

The gifts were donated by generous area residents who participated in fill the bus toy drive effort sponsored by Neighborhoods United and the New Bedford, Acushnet, Dartmouth and Fairhaven police departments.

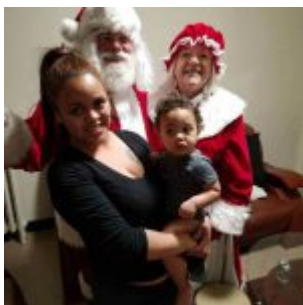


“We are very grateful for the generous donations from the community,” said New Bedford Police Lt. Ricard Rezendes, who helped to coordinate the effort. “We also appreciate our sponsors who give their time and hard work to make this very rewarding effort a success. I wish to extend a special thanks to Jerry Pinto of Neighborhoods United for his hard work in leading the Safe Zones Fill the Bus Toy Drive again this year.”

On Wednesday and Thursday, Dec. 20 and 21, a Tremblay’s Bus drove through the city streets, dropping off presents to families to ensure that everyone had gifts to open Christmas morning. Gifts were also distributed to children at St. Luke’s

Hospital.

As police officers, Neighborhoods United staff members and Mr. and Mrs. Claus knocked on doors of recipients, they were met by enthusiasm responses from the children and an emotional outpouring from the families.





"Things like this never happen to people like me," said one hard-working single mother, tears in her eyes.

Another dad had one response as he watched his son receive a present. "God bless you," he said.

Sponsors of the event are: New Bedford Third District Court Probation Department; The Boat restaurant; Southcoasttoday.com; WBSM/WHFN, 107.1 FM; Cumberland Farms, New Bedford and Dartmouth; Target, Dartmouth; Wal-Mart, Fairhaven; Toys R Us, Babies R Us, Dartmouth; Blue Eagle Printing; New Bedford Guide; Neighborhoods United; Minuteman Harley-Davidson; A. Walecka & Son; Tremblay's Bus and employees; Amaral Bus and Beacon Paint & Hardware.