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Spreading the Christmas spirit in Barstow

Jose Quintero, Victorville Daily Press

Posted: December 24, 2019, 3:27 pm



Barstow Mayor Julie Hackbarth-McIntyre, center, delivers a skateboard to one lucky child Tuesday morning as part of the Barstow Police Department's Police Activities League's 24th annual Christmas Cops and Kids Program. [Jose Quintero/Daily Press]

BARSTOW — Christmas Eve in this city means several things — toys, smiles and gratitude.

Barstow children crowded the streets Tuesday morning as the sound of sirens brought Christmas joy and gifts as part of the 24th annual Christmas Cops and Kids Program.

Delontae Fowler, 4, didn't have many words to say, but his expression said everything. Delontae's face lit up like a Christmas tree when he found out he could grab a toy of his choice.

The young boy grabbed a board game to play with his siblings.

Delontae's mother, Johnae Washington, was grateful after seeing her children given toys from police officers.

"This is my second year living here, so last year I didn't know what to expect after hearing the sirens and everything," Washington said. "I had no idea that every kid in our neighborhood was going to get a toy.

"That's amazing because some parents don't have the money to buy their kids many gifts, or even any gifts. So this is really nice, such a blessing, for everyone that donated, we are all thankful for that. This is greatly appreciated."

The annual event saw the Barstow Police Department's Police Activities League fundraise roughly \$50,000 to help purchase thousands of toys that were delivered by eight teams in every neighborhood in the city.

PAL spearheads the long-running program with assistance from various agencies, including the Barstow Police Department, Barstow Fire Protection District, **San Bernardino County Fire** Department and the Bureau of Land Management.

Over 500 volunteers on eight different teams met at 6:45 a.m. to begin loading up delivery trucks that also distributed toys in some surrounding communities, like Hinkley and Lenwood.

Eryck Jones, 9, said he remembered getting a skateboard two years ago after the sirens woke him up. Last year, he picked a board game. On Tuesday, Eryck chose a basketball as his gift.

"I really like playing basketball at school with my friends," he said. "I have two basketballs, but I wanted a brand new one to show my friends."

Eryck said he was thankful for "policemen that donated toys for children."

Toys were the main attraction Tuesday, but the children were also treated to candy canes from Mojave Auto Group, as well as coupons for Del Taco and Fosters Freeze.

The gift giving was first introduced, on a small scale, 24 years ago when Tim Heiden wanted to prove police officers weren't the "bad guys" while patrolling the streets of Barstow.

"We go to the house calls. There are times we are arresting parents and, in the kids' eyes, sometimes we are the bad guys," Heiden said.

Heiden, who retired from the force in 2014, likely never would've imagined that his days of filling his garage and squad car with toys two decades ago would blossom into such a large-scale affair that raises more than \$50,000 and reaches so many Barstow children.

He said it's been interesting to watch that progression.

"All the money we get is through fundraising," Heiden said. "We don't get money from the City of Barstow, the police department. It's all from the community. We start raising the money during the summertime, and we go out and buy the toys. That's what makes this an extremely different program."

One of Heiden's fondest memories was when he met two brothers several years ago. Heiden learned that the brothers and their family came to America with just \$1,500. The boys' father decided the family would skip Christmas that year.

Heiden said the brothers heard the police sirens, went outside to see the commotion and walked back home with a pair of toys.

"Those were the only gifts those boys got that year," he said. "Now they are big supporters of our program. They recently donated a couple hundred dollars. That's what touches my heart."

"Then you have the kids that see us outside of Walmart that come up to us with a bit of change and say it is all they have but they want to help buy toys. It's amazing."

<https://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20191224/spreading-christmas-spirit-in-barstow>

Firefighters deliver toys to Upland family who lost home in plane crash

Leticia Juarez, Eyewitness abc 7 News

Posted: Monday, December 23, 2019, 8:35 pm

UPLAND, Calif. (KABC) -- It was not where the Tonello family planned to welcome their guests this Christmas.

The home they are in is not their own.

Last month, a plane crashed into their home in Upland.

The pilot was killed, but miraculously no one else on the ground was hurt, including Heather Tonello's husband and their 2-year-old son, who were home at the time.

"We have been through a lot but we are so thankful for everybody who has helped us out in so many ways," said Heather Tonello.

On Monday morning, the family got a very special visit from some of the firefighters who were on the scene of the crash.

They came bearing gifts for the entire family, from toys to an Xbox for the oldest girls.

The toys were provided through the Spark of Love.

Santa and Batman were also on hand to help make the delivery.

Chief Dan Munsey of the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department gave credit to neighbors saying, "The benevolence of this community and the county as a whole really allows us to do this kind of thing."

In this season of giving, firefighters and the community are helping to restore what was lost.

For the Tonellos the best gift of all was being able to share another Christmas as a family.

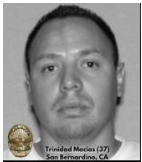
"Just happy to be together this year and we can start over as a family that we are all safe and well and have each other," added Tonello.

<https://abc7.com/community-events/firefighters-deliver-toys-to-upland-family-who-lost-home-in-plane-crash/5781060/>

Three suspects are arrested after two people are shot in Fontana on Dec. 21

Staff Writer, Fontana Herald News

Posted: December 23, 2019



Trinidad Macias was arrested on an attempted murder charge after two people were shot and injured in Fontana on Dec. 21. Macias later led authorities on an hour-long chase on local freeways before being taken into custody. Two other suspects were also arrested in connection with the case. (Contributed photo by Fontana Police Department)

Three suspects were arrested in connection with a shooting incident in southern Fontana, and one of the suspects led authorities on an hour-long pursuit on local freeways with his infant child inside the vehicle, according to the Fontana Police Department.

On Dec. 21 at about 4:20 a.m., officers were dispatched to the 15900 block of Tyrol Drive for a report of several subjects armed with handguns and a rifle. Upon arrival, two male adult victims were found inside the residence suffering from gunshot wounds to the legs and torso.

Medical aid was provided by officers and **San Bernardino County Fire/Medics**. Both victims were transported to an area hospital, where they are currently in stable condition.

Detectives were able to identify three suspects who were allegedly involved in the shooting -- Michael Santoscoy, 28, of Colton, Christopher Santoscoy, 23, of Colton, and Trinidad Macias, 37, of San Bernardino. Michael and Christopher Santoscoy were located and arrested by detectives without incident.

Then on Dec. 22 at about 10 p.m., officers served a search warrant in the 900 block of Encina Avenue in Rialto. At the same time, officers located Macias getting into a white Nissan Altima in the 6100 block of Honeysuckle Lane in San Bernardino.

Macias failed to stop for officers, and a pursuit was initiated, police said. When the pursuit entered the freeway, it was relinquished to the California Highway Patrol. The pursuit lasted more than an hour and traveled on the 210, 215, 15, and 10 freeways.

Macias was on the phone with his family members and the CHP during the pursuit. He claimed to have several handguns, a rifle, and his infant child in the vehicle with him. At one point, Macias threw a handgun out of the vehicle onto the freeway, and it was recovered by trailing officers, police said.

Finally, Macias yielded on N. Bordwell Avenue in Colton, where he was arrested without incident. The infant was unharmed and released to his mother.

Michael Santoscoy and Macias were arrested on attempted murder charges and Christopher Santoscoy was arrested on a charge of conspiracy to commit a felony. All three suspects were booked at West Valley Detention Center.

https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/three-suspects-are-arrested-after-two-people-are-shot-in/article_1f0be8cc-25be-11ea-947d-4708221d13f9.html

Storms moving through region increase chance for white Christmas in high desert

Christopher Damien, Palm Springs Desert Sun

Posted: December 23, 2019, 12:37 pm

The Coachella Valley woke to mountains lined with snow as skies cleared on Christmas Eve after a drizzly and grey start to the week, and more is expected with a winter storm watch is in effect from Wednesday evening through late Thursday.

Rain soaked much of the Coachella Valley on Monday and more is likely on the way Thursday, possibly turning to snow at higher elevations, including Yucca Valley.

Monday's rain began in Palm Springs just after 11 a.m., according to the National Weather Service. About a quarter-inch of rain had fallen by 4 p.m. Heavier showers hit the coast earlier Monday morning ahead of busy holiday travel days.

While areas of coastal San Diego and Orange counties received as much as 1.5 inches of rain in the morning, Tyler Maio of the National Weather Service said, the storm broke up as it moved inland.

Throughout the Christmas week, highs will be in the low to mid-60s, according to the weather service.

Snow fell Monday in area mountains above 5,000 feet.

Heavy snow is possible starting Wednesday night with potentially 4-8 inches below 4,500 feet, 12 to 24 inches from 4,500 to 6,500 feet, and more than 24 inches above 6,500 feet with localized amounts to 40 inches possible, according to a National Weather Service storm watch advisory.

San Bernardino County mountains likely will get about 2 to 6 inches of snow at elevations above 5,000 feet and up to a foot of snow at elevations above 7,000, according to a National Weather Service advisory.

Big Bear ski resorts reported as much as 6 inches of snow fell during Monday's storm.

The town of Yucca Valley issued a winter storm warning to residents of the high desert community, saying the inclement weather conditions are expected to last into Friday, with freezing temperatures predicted through Sunday. Residents are advised to take precautions and avoid unnecessary travel when possible.

The advisory also cautioned about wet and flooded roadways. Sandbags are available for residents to pick up at the town's public works facility at 58928 Business Center Drive, as well as **Fire Stations No. 41, No. 42, and No. 36 in Joshua Tree.**

Palm Springs in 2019 has had nearly double the rainfall it did in 2018, according to the weather service.

<https://www.desertsun.com/story/weather/2019/12/23/rain-hits-palm-springs-area-monday-likely-return-christmas-day/2736510001/>