

OPERATION ELVES COMMUNITY

Giving to Children in Need



Spotlight **Operation Elf Contributor - Sheri Ferguson**

We now have a logo for our cause - thanks to my good and talented friend, Sheri Ferguson.

Sheri is a talented graphic designer who has been running her own business since 1998. Over the years, she has helped me with numerous projects both personally and professionally. She has such a good "eye" for translating my primitive thoughts into something wonderful.

Earlier this year, I went to Sheri to ask her for help in creating a unique design that we could use for our Operation Elves newsletter and other things we might want to brand.

And Sheri not only graciously offered her ideas which led to our new design, but she also did it as a "gift" to the cause, so money could be spent on buying materials and gifts for children in need. It is a very generous gift of which I am truly grateful.

Sheri's signature graphic design work has had an impact on some other projects we have working on together for the community in Maine. Sheri designed a bookbag for the 2nd graders of Academy Hill School. Each year the new 2nd graders get a Diggity Dog bookbag and a book a month through the school year. And this year, Sheri helped me to create a recipe coloring book for the 2nd graders to color and give to their parents for a Christmas present.

Whenever I have an "idea" it is Sheri that turns it into professional, creative design. And when Sheri is not busy working on the little projects I give her, she works with clients throughout the US to create brochures, book design and layout, and newsletters to name a few. Sheri even designed and published her own magazine, **LiveSouthNash**, which highlighted local businesses in the Nashville area. The magazine was published from 2009 - 2011.

I want to thank Sheri from the bottom of my heart for helping to create our own logo and elf figure that is fun and whimsical giving us our own identity. And for those of you who have been a contributor to our cause, we have a small gift coming your way shortly to say "thank you"!

Volume 5 - December 2021

Updates for this issue

2022 gift goals

Blankets - 240 (17% to goal)
Hat Sets - 180 (2% to goal)
Young Adult Books - 160 (3% to goal)

2022 current gift count

Blankets - 40
Hat Sets - 3
Young Adult Books: 5

How Can You Get Involved

You can reach me (melissa stack) at:

- melissa.operationelves@gmail.com
- jusmel@comcast.net
- [venmo:@melissa-stack-3](https://venmo.com/melissa-stack-3)
- 615-631-4920

To learn how you can help make a difference for a child at Christmas!

Let me know if you would like to add anyone to our newsletter distribution. The next issue will be in February.

Special Thanks

Here we would like to get a big shout-out to individuals who have contributed to this year's goal in the past two months! Special thank you to:

- Lisa L



Melissa, Anissa & Aaron



Linda putting in the last gifts



Bill checking on our trailer

2021 ROADTRIP & DELIVERY

I am extremely grateful for a chance to meet the most caring people (Anissa & Aaron Allumbaugh) and a wonderful organization (Framington Elks). As the head of the Elks, one of Aaron's responsibilities is ensuring that "Operation Santa" is a success. Last year, they helped 259 families and over 750 kids. Throughout the year, the Elk's organization focuses on raising money for Operation Santa, delivering backpacks, hosting Halloween fun, and many other wonderful events for kids in this community.

When we arrived we were met by Aaron and Anissa who were ready to take our gifts and put them into their new storage area (Two 40 foot storage containers) that they were hoping to fill with toys and gifts for the children in their five counties that they will be helping this year.

While unpacking and getting a tour of their building, we learned a little more about how they figured out gifts for the children. Each parent makes a list of three needs & three wants for a child. Then the Elks try to fulfill as many as they can for each child. You will be happy to know that the blankets and hat sets we provide - are given to children without it going towards their gift limit!

I am so humbled and grateful to meet such caring and wonderful people who make it their mission to help the children in their area to enjoy a happy Christmas season. And I am grateful beyond words for your support in helping strangers in need. May your holiday be blessed and may you know **you have made a difference!**

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"Nothing is more valuable than time, and nothing is more rewarding than when you use it to bring happiness to others"

Sheri Ferguson



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Spotlight Operation Elf Contributor - Jean Stack

This month's Elf spotlight is **Jean Stack** who also happens to be my mother-in-law and a big Buffalo Bills fan (she is still mourning the loss to the Kansas City Chiefs).

My second greatest supporter (after my mother) on this adventure to help children has been Jean (Jeannie to all who know her). To meet Jeanie means being welcomed by a kind soul whom everyone wants to be their grandmother. She is giving, fun, and instantly makes you feel like you are the most important person in the room. Jeannie is from upstate New York, so she knows what it means to face a cold, long winter. In fact, before she became a snowbird, she spent most of her life facing cold winters with a lot of days that were below zero and trying to figure out ways to stay warm.

Jeannie is always trying to help those in need in her communities both in New York and in Florida. She volunteers at the food pantry, drives those in need through Catholic charities, and makes hats for babies in the hospital. So when we started Operation Elves, Jeannie was one of my 1st volunteers to help make the "hat sets", as we call them, for children in need through Operation Santa.

Jeannie would be the first to say she is not a domestic goddess; however, she enjoys crocheting. She didn't start out crocheting first, which she would learn to do later in life when our daughter Sammy taught her how. But she is a long-time knitter, learning from her dad who made socks for folks in the military back in the early 1900s. When she is a snowbird, she joins a group of women, the Happy Hookers" on Sundays (when there is no football), where everyone works on their own crafty project and gets to enjoy a community of friends.

Jean is truly an example of "if we each help and the way we can, we truly can make a world of difference". Jean is one of the big contributors to our "hat set" numbers and given how popular they are each year - we are sure glad to have her on team "Operation Elves".

Makes me happy to think I am helping somebody - Jeannie Stack

Volume 6 - February 2022

Updates for this issue

2022 gift goals

Blankets - 240 (34% to goal)
Hat Sets - 180 (31% to goal)
Books - 160 (81% to goal)

2022 current gift count

Blankets - 80
Hat Sets - 56
Young Adult Books:28

How Can You Get Involved

You can reach me (melissa stack) at:

- melissa.operationelves@gmail.com
- jusmel@comcast.net
- venmo:@melissa-stack-3
- 615-631-4920

To learn how you can help make a difference for a child at Christmas!

Let me know if you would like to add anyone to our newsletter distribution. The next issue will be in April.

Special Thanks

Here we would like to get a big shout-out to individuals who have contributed to this year's goal in the past two months! Special thank you to:

- Shannon R
- Theresa B
- Beverly N
- Ted D



2021 OPERATION SANTA RECAP

It is hard to believe that Christmas 2021 is a distant memory and we are already into the month of February 2022. And while we now turn our attention towards the goals for 2022, I thought you would like to hear how your donations helped Operation Santa make Christmas special in 2021.

The Stat's

- **856** children were helped in 2021 (30% increase of children in need over 2020)
- **341** families served (30% more families in need over 2020)
- **92** Seniors in nursing facilities received Christmas gifts (blankets and other gifts similar to the children in need)

All of the items we donated got put to good use and were all given away. As you can imagine, the “hat sets” were a BIG hit – with temperatures dropping to below freezing these last couple of weeks.

Aaron and Anissa, the leaders of Operation Santa, say their biggest challenge is trying to serve such a wide range of children and balance making it special for the little ones without forgetting the teenagers. The cosmetic bags for girls were a big hit and teenage boys tend to want tools, fishing, or camping gear. And for those who are under 1 year of age, their biggest need is diapers, learning toys, and clothes. (Children served by Operation Santa ranged from newborns to age 17 - the majority of the children fall between 5 – 12 with about 25% being less than 1 years of age).

So as we go into 2022, we will continue to focus on blankets and hat sets. For book donations, we will expand our scope to not only include young adults but children of all ages. So as the volunteers are putting the packages together, they can put a book in for every child at all age groups.

If you are someone who would like to know what other needs Operation Santa has, here are a few suggestions that we would happily bring to Maine i(n the fall) if you want to donate: Legos, baby dolls, diapers, learning toys for newborns to toddlers, fishing or camping gear, and cosmetic bags for girls.

With your support, we are able to help the Farmington Elks via Operation Santa serve a community in need. It is also important to say a special "thank you" to the Farmington Elks Lodge for their support and donations. Numerous individuals work to organize, put together and hand out all the gifts that have been donated.

Thank you for your generosity this past year. Your contribution has affected families who struggle with making ends meet on a daily basis and ensuring that kids, who without your support would go without at Christmas, were able to enjoy the spirit of Christmas. The need is real and know that you are making a difference in a community and in the world. If we each continue to do a little, we will collectively do a lot. Thank you.

