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How the *Blue Sleigh Toy Drive and Toy Run* Works

The Blue Sleigh Toy Drive and Toy Run are ministries of the Empty Tomb Church, conducted with the assistance of Volunteer Coordinators and other local community agencies.

The Empty Tomb Church is an IRS recognized 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, religious charity. Empty Tomb Church is the authorized fundraising and support organization for the Blue Sleigh Toy Drive and Toy Run. The Empty Tomb Church arranges for the support needed for successful annual toy collection and distribution processes. The Empty Tomb Church is headquartered in Avondale, AZ, located just about 30 minutes west of downtown Phoenix, AZ.

Annually, local toy collection programs are conducted in partnership with the Empty Tomb Church and local schools, churches, and businesses for distribution in the Blue Sleigh Toy Run. One individual, either a member of Empty Tomb Church or a volunteer member of a local community organization, is designated as the Blue Sleigh Toy Drive Coordinator for that community. The Coordinator is responsible for assisting in planning, organizing and conducting the toy collection programs within his/her community. Coordinators are responsible for establishing close working relationships with schools, churches, other local community organizations, and social welfare agencies which are well qualified to identify the needy children in the community. Coordinators play important roles in the collection and distribution of the toys.

Local toy collection programs begin in October and last until the Wednesday, two weeks before Christmas. Toy distribution then takes place the weekend before Christmas. Members of the community drop off new, unwrapped, toys in collection boxes positioned in local schools, churches, and businesses. Coordinators pick up these toys and store them in a central storeroom where the toys are sorted by age and gender. At Christmas, Coordinators with the assistance of local school groups, church groups, other local community organizations, and social welfare agencies, distribute the toys to the underprivileged children of the community in the form of a Toy Run. While the Blue Sleigh Toy Drive Coordinators organize, coordinate, and manage the toy collection and distribution programs, the ultimate success depends on the support of the local community and the generosity of the people who donate toys.

Local business and school leaders play key roles. They allow Blue Sleigh Toy Drive Coordinators to locate drop-off/collection boxes in their facilities; provide free warehouse space for storing and sorting toys during October, November, and December; provide vehicles to collect toys from drop-off sites; sponsor toy raising events; and help Blue Sleigh Toy Drive Coordinators arrange media exposure for the Blue Sleigh Toy Run in the local community.

Local and National corporations can support the Blue Sleigh Toy Drive by establishing affiliations with the Blue Sleigh Foundation. These corporations make donations to the Foundation or conduct marketing initiatives from which they share royalties with the Foundation. In almost every instance, the marketing initiatives of these corporations give significant added visibility and name recognition to Blue Sleigh Toy Drive. Such visibility enhances the campaign at the national and local levels. The funds emanating from these affiliations enable the Foundation to purchase toys to supplement local collections; purchase promotion and support materials and defer the costs of annual Blue Sleigh Toy Drive toy collection programs.

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