



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2023.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Chesterfield County

Program Title: Toy Drive

Program Category: Community and Economic Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Joseph P. Casey, Ph.D.

Title: County Administrator

Signature: Joseph P. Casey, Ph.D.

Digitally signed by Joseph P. Casey, Ph.D.
DN: cn=Joseph P. Casey, Ph.D., o=Chesterfield County, ou=County Administration,
email=caseyjoe@chesterfield.gov, c=US
Date: 2023.06.27 12:44:50 -04'00'



Holiday Toy Bonanza Toy Drive and Distribution VACo Application 2023

Executive Summary

The Chesterfield County Public Library Holiday Toy Bonanza is an avenue to connect Chesterfield communities, while positioning the library as a place of safety and stability and bringing the public library to the forefront of citizens' hearts and minds. Redistributing toys to new families reduces waste and provides toys to families who cannot afford to purchase them. Additionally, and most importantly to the library, this program raises awareness of the public library in the community and what it has to offer to residents who need us most.

The 2022 Holiday Toy Bonanza provided toys for over 150 families at 4 locations, a five-fold increase from the inaugural 2021 event. The return on investment was substantial. We used only existing staff hours, volunteers and \$150. The impact on individual families was immeasurable. The Freeshop locations were determined based on the significant impact to the communities they served. CCPL's Ettrick-Matoaca Library is in a service area with some of the highest poverty levels in the county. Meadowdale Library is located in a high poverty area and sees the highest number of Spanish speaking customers, a population we were able to reach through a local Spanish radio station broadcast.

Citizens of all socio-economic levels benefit from this program. Lower-income citizens are given the opportunity to provide memorable winter holidays for their children. Higher-income citizens can give back to their community in a meaningful way and share that giving spirit with their children. Positioning the library at the center of this exchange reinforces the library's value to

the community as well as to the individual citizens involved, connecting citizens positively to county resources.

The connections this program made with Ask Midlothian Moms and to the police department will pave the way for future partnerships, allowing this valuable program room to grow. Community members are already asking when we'll begin collecting for the next event.

The Problem or Need for the Program

The Holiday Toy Bonanza originated in fall 2021 from a robust conversation with local moms in “Ask Midlothian Moms” (AMM), a local Facebook group. AMM is an active nonprofit focusing on local issues. There are 12,000 members who live all over Chesterfield County and the surrounding region. COVID-19 had created shipping delays and supply chain issues, resulting in parents looking for creative ways to fulfill holiday wish lists. Members began discussing toy swaps instead of relying on new items. Dana Bomba, manager of Chester Library and a member of AMM, began formulating a more structured collection and swap program. Donations were so numerous during the collection period, the event’s objective shifted beyond just a toy swap and into a charitable opportunity. This shift enabled the library to serve a greater and obvious community need, and the program was expanded in 2022. The process for participation was very simple. There were no criteria to meet and no need to apply. According to census data, there are an estimated 142,357 households in Chesterfield County. The Youth and Family Indicator Report of 2018 from Chesterfield County Citizen Information and Resources reports that there are 45,515 households in the county with children. Of those households, 3,777 live in poverty, showing a need for this type of program.

Description of the Program

From October 24-November 5, 2022, all Chesterfield County Public Library (CCPL) locations accepted donations of new and gently used toys. The timeframe coincided with early voting

before the November election, when a higher number of citizens were coming to five of the CCPL locations serving as polling locations. The idea was to take advantage of a nationally recognized act of service and heavily publicize the program to those standing in line waiting to vote.

Public support for the toy drive was strong. Early in the second week of the drive, WTVR Channel 6 interviewed Chester Library Branch Manager Dana Bomba about the program. Donations increased in the second week following the story.

The toy drive resulted in donations of a few thousand small to medium sized toys. Approximately 74 medium sized boxes, 5 commercial laundry bins of medium and large toys, and 4 commercial size trash bags of stuffed animals were collected during the two week collection period.

During the second week of November, CCPL delivery drivers made extra trips to move all the donations to one location where they were sorted and boxed for distribution to the event locations. Every toy was cleaned prior to distribution. Staff from multiple library locations volunteered for this task.

The toy drive was a systemwide effort enabling staff at all levels to participate through advertising and accepting donations. The number of feel-good stories of giving during the collection period were numerous. Parents took the opportunity to teach their children about giving too.

Graphics for promotion included images for all holidays and was advertised as a holiday program, not just a Christmas program, to reach more residents. Many avenues were utilized to promote the Freeshops to citizens of Chesterfield County including the CCPL Facebook page, the Chesterfield County Facebook page, local community pages across social media platforms,

inside all libraries, and at elementary schools in the southern region of the county where economic need is greater.

Information about the distribution events was also shared with county agencies who focus on youth in a variety of ways including the Positive Parenting Coalition (a partnership of local government and school groups who work directly with families), Chesterfield Food Bank and The James House (a non-profit dedicated to helping people affected by sexual and/or domestic violence). The CCPS Pre-K coordinator was active in promoting the events, as that student population consisted entirely of students who met mandated Head Start and Title I criteria.

Adriana Rosales, CCPL's creative content writer is also the host of a local Spanish radio station, Ultra Radio Richmond 94.1 FM. She translated the promotional materials into Spanish for the station's Facebook page and shared the Freeshop information during their morning radio show. The station's Facebook page has 9,500 followers and the morning show has 3,000-5,000 listeners from 7-10 a.m. daily. She worked at the Meadowdale Library Freeshop where the majority of the Spanish speaking attendees were anticipated.

The Freeshop locations were determined based on the significant impact to the communities they served. Ettrick-Matoaca Library coordinated a morning Freeshop and an afternoon Holiday Festival on Saturday, November 12. The following week, Bon Air Library, Meadowdale Library, and Clover Hill Library held evening events on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Meadowdale Library set up an outreach table to promote library card signup. Their community police officer also joined in the fun, helping set up and interacting with community members.

By scheduling the events in different locations across the county, on different days and at different times of day, we were able to maximize our reach. Collected toys were equally distributed to all four locations. The intent was to send any leftover toys from one event to the

next scheduled event; however at the end of each day there weren't any toys left. There were dozens of grateful families with bright smiles, and some tears, leaving each event.

CCPL's Ettrick-Matoaca Library is in a service area with some of the highest poverty levels in the county. At this site, most toys were given out within the first 20 minutes of the four hour event. To our delight and surprise, local Chesterfield County Police officers arrived with boxes of locally donated toys they had been saving for a post-Covid event. They restocked the tables with an incredible array of options, including multiple tables of Barbies. This allowed CCPL to meet the increased need of that community with far more toys than we anticipated, and reenforcing a partnership with that community agency. In total, we served about 150 families at 4 locations, distributing approximately 1,500 toys.

The Cost of the Program

Measuring the cost of the collection of toys, the delivery of toys to their locations, and the time spent setting up at each location is challenging. Staff time spent on this program was part of regular branch allocations. However, 35 staff hours were spent cleaning, sorting, and packing toys from the central storage location and approximately \$150 was spent on cleaning and packing supplies.

The Results of the Program

The 2022 Holiday Toy Bonanza provided toys for over 150 families at 4 locations, a five-fold increase from the inaugural 2021 event.

The return on investment was substantial. We used only existing staff hours, volunteers and \$150. The impact on individual families was immeasurable.

Attendees expressed their gratitude during the events and almost every family filled out a comment card. The card had one question on it: How did this event impact your holiday?

Here are just a few of the most impactful comments:

- My husband had a stroke 6 weeks ago and I have been caring for him and only able to work a few hours a week. This event has been such a blessing. Thank you so much! (2 kids)
- This helps me provide for my kids as a single mom, working 2 jobs to make ends meet in this economy. Thank you so much!
- It makes a difference in having [toys] for all the kids. It also brings joy and love to my heart to know that acts of kindness such as these are here for me to be able to provide so much more for my family.
- Live in a hotel with 4 kids. They will love this.
- It saves a lot of money that we can use for food and gas. Keeps toys out of the landfill.
- This is such a great event. I can't wait to give next year and watch this event grow. This will definitely impact my kids in regard to giving and receiving.

Even though the event began as a sustainability program and shifted to a giving opportunity, we used this time to also share library information and services with our community. While we saw some familiar faces, there were many new ones at all event locations.

CCPL will continue to host this program and is already planning for the next ones. Following the end of the 2022 program, the planning committee met to evaluate the process and generated ideas to increase its efficiency and effectiveness. The committee is evaluating how to bring in more community partners to have a greater impact on Chesterfield County citizens.

Overview

Chesterfield County Public Library's Holiday Toy Bonanza was a toy donation drive and distribution event, designed to allow citizens to contribute to their community and to connect

with the library. Toys were collected at all library locations, sorted and cleaned, and redistributed at “Freeshop” events to self-identified families in need just before the winter holidays. At these events, items were displayed in categories and citizens shopped for free. These events allowed the library to contribute to the community, while the shop-like structure of the event maintained a level of dignity for those selecting items. The outcome was strengthening community connection by using the library as a central hub and building community trust in county government.

Supplemental Materials

Promotional materials



**CCPL Holiday
Toy Bonanza:
Toy Drive**

Oct. 24-Nov. 5

All library locations, during business hours

Donate new or gently used toys.
Donations will be distributed among participating library locations for community Toy Freeshop events in November.

For more information about donations or the Toy Freeshop Events, please call 804-751-CCPL (2275).

CCPL CHESTERFIELD COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

The poster features a dark blue background with festive icons: a menorah, a snow globe, a Christmas tree, and a basket of crayons. The text is in white and light blue.



**CCPL Holiday Toy Bonanza:
Toy Freeshop Events**

Ettrick-Matoaca Library: Saturday, Nov. 12, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Bon Air Library: Tuesday, Nov. 15, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Clover Hill Library: Wednesday, Nov. 16, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Meadowdale Library: Thursday, Nov. 17, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

“Shop” for new-to-you toys to gift to the children in your life.
These events are open to the public,
and toys are FREE of charge.

The poster features a dark blue background with festive icons: a snow globe, a Christmas tree, and a snowflake. The text is in white and light blue.

Photos from toy distribution events

