



NAVAIR

Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey

PRESS RELEASE



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News Release: 12-1
Date: 13 Dec 2011
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Navy Workers Share the Holiday Spirit with Local Head-Start Children

Dec 13, 2011, LAKEHURST, NJ: For the 36th consecutive year, the men and women at Navy Lakehurst, on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, have come together to support their annual Holiday gift giving program “The Navy Lakehurst Giving Tree.” The program, begun in the 1970s, originally had disadvantaged children from local head-start programs come out to the base theater for a Holiday Party hosted by Santa Claus. When the theater was torn down in the late 1990s, the event continued by bringing Santa to the schools to deliver gifts. For many of these children, it is the only gift they receive during the Holiday Season.

This year, three head start schools in Manchester, Toms River and Berkeley were visited by Santa and the sailors who helped him load his sleigh. Because of the generosity of the Lakehurst civilians, sailors and families, 216 gifts were distributed to the children, aged 3-5.

“We start collecting gifts shortly after Thanksgiving through volunteers who get the word out around Lakehurst,” said Tom Worsdale, NAVAIR Lakehurst Public Affairs Officer, who acts as program coordinator. “I am amazed at the personal generosity displayed each year. The quality of the gifts, the care everyone takes in wrapping their presents, even the small details like ensuring batteries are included for toys clearly demonstrates the commitment and pride our employees and sailors take in making this program such a long standing success and tradition.”

“These children and their families really appreciate what the people from the base do to make their Holidays special and we thank them all for their continued care and support,” said Monique Goncalves, Director of the Manchester Head-Start Program.

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