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News Release

Attn: Education Desk and Community Desk

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COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO REQUEST FOR TEDDY BEARS, ENOUGH FOR EVERY NORTH PARK STUDENT AND MORE

Every single **North Park Elementary School** student has received a brand-new teddy bear thanks to the generosity of the people in our local community and beyond.

According to Tracylyn Sharrit, Director of Development for Santa Claus, Inc., the community has been so generous that the Boys & Girls Club of San Bernardino, where the teddy bears have been stored on behalf of North Park, has about 4,000 more teddy bears than there are North Park students.

Santa Claus, Inc., which helped organize the teddy bears collected by many different community efforts, does not want the bears or the outpouring of love they represent to go to waste. Santa Claus, Inc. is making the teddy bears available to any and all children who attend the San Bernardino City Unified School District (SBCUSD) and who have suffered a tragedy or are in need of emotional support. Santa Claus, Inc.'s Sandra Lourenco, who works closely with SBCUSD to support students in need, will coordinate with SBCUSD counselors and administrators to make sure the teddy bears get into the hands of the children who need them.

According to Sharrit, once the needs of local students have been met, any remaining teddy bears will be donated to places that come in contact with or support children in crisis, such as the Ronald McDonald House in Loma Linda and the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

According to **Ginger Ontiveros**, SBCUSD **Community Engagement Office** executive director, while there is no longer a need for teddy bears, there is still a need for donations to

support the students and staff at North Park Elementary School. The SBCUSD's Making Hope Happen Foundation established the Hope for North Park Elementary School fund to provide counseling for traumatized families, school assemblies and activities to restore a sense of emotional security for students, as well as any unforeseen needs of the North Park Elementary family.

For information on how to make a tax-deductible donation to the Hope for North Park Elementary School fund, visit www.makinghope.org/northpark or call the Community Engagement Office at (909) 381-1294.

For more information about Santa Claus, Inc. and how it supports students and families throughout the year through its Youth Enrichment Services, call (909) 885-0090.

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