



Simsbury Board of Education Offices
933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070
Tel. 860-651-3361 www.simsbury.k12.ct.us

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CONTACT:
David Salonia
Simsbury High School Engineering teacher
dsalonia@simsburyschools.net
860-658-0451

SHS Students Help Brighten Holidays for Local Children

SIMSBURY, CT—Simsbury High School (SHS) is holding its ninth annual **Toy Drive & Stuff a Cruiser Event** in partnership with the Simsbury Police Department and the Hartford Salvation Army.

On December 15, SHS Engineering teacher and toy drive organizer Dave Salonia, will oversee the “Stuff a Cruiser” event, along with SHS School Resource Officer Trevor Brittell, student Police Cadets, participating student groups, and members of the Salvation Army. The toys will be transported by the officers to the Salvation Army Distribution Center in Farmington for disbursement to needy families in time for the holidays.

Last year, the students collected a total of 236 toys, a remarkable effort, given the challenges presented by COVID. Usually the school collects donations not just from the students but encourages participation from faculty and the school community via drop-offs into the “Big Red Toy Box” in the lobby of the High School.

Salonia was grateful for all the support received for this community outreach effort during a very difficult time for families. He had been told by Simsbury Police that, “between what we did and all the other donating members of the Stuff a Cruiser Drive, we saved the day for The Salvation Army. They would NOT have been able to provide toys to all families that requested them if it were not for our collective efforts.”

This year's event will be no different with a goal of 300 toys, said Salonia. "The SHS Technology Education, Engineering and other students did a tremendous job, preparing the toy box and signs, and making announcements."

About the SHS Toy Drive and Stuff a Cruiser Event

The Toy Drive & Stuff a Cruiser Event was originally conceived by Salonia's "SHS Connect" class nine years ago. SHS Connect is the homeroom period required for all students, which meets twice month. During this time, students learn to apply the "Trojan Code" principles of Respect, Honor, and Responsibility to all of their behaviors, both inside and outside of school. They also learn 21st Century skills, such as goal setting, problem-solving, leadership, and teamwork. Most importantly, students learn how to respect each other and give back to their community. Community service projects like the Toy Drive are a direct and positive outcome from these classes. We thank everyone who is participating in this school wide event!

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