

The Jeep Expeditions Group

Supports the USMC Toys for Tots Program !

For more information on Toys for Tots please visit :

<http://www.toysfortots.org/>

Our GOAL each year is to fill a Jeep Grand Cherokee from top to bottom and front to back with toys for needy girls and boys.

Origin and Evolution of Toys for Tots

Colonel William L. Hendricks
USMCR (Ret)

Toys for Tots began in 1947 when Major Bill Hendricks, USMCR and a group of Marine Reservists in Los Angeles collected and distributed 5,000 toys to needy children. The idea came from Bill's wife, Diane. In the fall of 1947, Diane handcrafted a Raggedy Ann doll and asked Bill to deliver the doll to an organization, which would give it to a needy child at Christmas. When Bill determined that no agency existed, Diane told Bill that he should start one. He did. The 1947 pilot project was so successful that the Marine Corps adopted Toys for Tots in 1948 and expanded it into a nationwide campaign. That year, Marine Corps Reserve units across the nation conducted Toys for Tots campaigns in each community in which a Marine Reserve Center was located. Marines have conducted successful nationwide campaigns at Christmas each year since 1948. The initial objective that remains the hallmark of the program today is to "bring the joy of Christmas to America's needy children." Bill Hendricks, a Marine Reservist on weekends, was in civilian life, the Director of Public Relations for Warner Brothers Studio. This enabled him to convince a vast array of celebrities to support Toys for Tots. In 1948, Walt Disney designed the Toys for Tots logo, which we use today. Disney also designed the first Toys for Tots poster used to promote the nationwide program. Nat "King" Cole, Peggy Lee, and Vic Damone recorded the Toys for Tots theme composed by Sammy Fain and Paul Webster in 1956. Bob Hope, John Wayne, Doris Day, Lorrie Morgan, Tim Allen, Kenny Rogers and Billy Ray Cyrus are but a few of the long list of celebrities who have given their time and talent to promote Toys for Tots. First Lady Nancy Reagan served as the national spokesperson in 1983. First Lady Barbara Bush served as the national spokesperson in 1992 and in her autobiography named Toys for Tots as one of her favorite charities.

From 1947 through 1979, Marines collected and distributed new and used toys. On Reserve drill weekends during October, November and December, Reserve Marines refurbished the used toys.

From Christmas 1980 through the present, Marines have collected and distributed only new toys. Three factors dictated this change. First, the Secretary of Defense's Total Force Program, introduced in the 1970s, assigned Reserves a greater role in America's defense posture. As a consequence, Reservists had to dedicate every minute of weekend drill time to honing and polishing combat skills. No time was available to refurbish toys. Second, public awareness of the health and safety aspects of toys that developed during the 70s made distribution of used toys legally inadvisable. Third, distributing "hand me down" toys does not send the message Marines want to send to needy children. The goal is to deliver a message of hope, which will build self-esteem and, in turn,

motivate needy children to grow into responsible, productive, patriotic citizens and community leaders. A shiny new toy is the best means of accomplishing this goal.

In the late 1980s, the Marine Corps determined that a non-profit charity was needed as an integral part of the overall national Toys for Tots program. Based on this need, the Secretary of Defense, in August 1991, authorized the Marine Corps to recognize and work with a charity committed to supporting Toys for Tots. Based on this approval, the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation became an operational organization in September 1991 and has been the fund raising and support organization for the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program since that date.

The Foundation was able to satisfy the five needs identified by the Marine Corps. First, the Foundation could provide toys to supplement the collections of local units that had fewer Marines due to military cutbacks of the 80s and 90s. Second, the Foundation could arrange and pay for the creation, publication, manufacture and distribution of promotion and support materials to Toys for Tots coordinators - something the declining budgets prevented the Marine Corps from doing any longer. Third, the Foundation could enable individual and corporate donors to Toys for Tots to take a charitable deduction on their income tax returns. Fourth, the Foundation could enter into contracts with corporations to conduct promotions, which would produce royalties for Toys for Tots. (Needs three and four were two important elements of this charitable endeavor that the Marine Corps, as a federal agency, could not fulfill). Fifth, the Foundation could ensure that the Toys for Tots program operates in compliance with IRS regulations, state laws and regulations and charitable standards.

In 1995, the Secretary of Defense approved Toys for Tots as an official activity of the U.S. Marine Corps and an official mission of the Marine Corps Reserve.

In 1996, the Commander, Marine Forces Reserve expanded Toys for Tots to cover all 50 states by authorizing selected Marine Corps League Detachments and selected local community organizations (generally veteran Marines), located in communities without a Marine Reserve Center, to conduct toy collection and distribution campaigns in their communities as part of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program.

In 1997, the Marine Corps celebrated the 50th anniversary of Toys for Tots.

In 1999, the Commander, Marine Forces Reserve delegated authority to the President, Marine Toys for Tots Foundation to approve and manage local Toys for Tots campaigns conducted in communities without a Reserve Unit.

2001: Despite the trauma the nation experienced as a result of the 911 attacks in New York City and Washington, DC, the economic downturn and the anthrax scare, the 2001 U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Campaign was the second best in the previous 54 year history of the program. Local campaigns were conducted in 388 communities covering all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. This was the most extensive coverage to date.

The Marine Toys for Tots Foundation celebrated its 10th anniversary as the fund-raising and support organization for Toys for Tots in 2001. The highlights of the year were that the Foundation had its most successful campaign to date plus was ranked #289 in the 2001 "Philanthropy 400". This was the first time the Foundation earned a ranking in the "Philanthropy 400".

In 2002, Charity Navigator awarded the Foundation a 4-star rating and the Chronicle of Philanthropy ranked the Foundation #267 in the "Philanthropy 400".

In 2003, the DMA Nonprofit Federation named the Foundation the “Outstanding Nonprofit Organization of the Year” for 2003. The Chronicle of Philanthropy ranked the Foundation #341 in the “Philanthropy 400”. Starburst ranked the Foundation website #9 of the “Top 100 Toy Websites”. Reader’s Digest, in the November 2003 edition, named Marine Toys for Tots Foundation “America’s Best Children’s Charity”. In the December 2003 edition, Forbes included Marine Toys for Tots Foundation in its “Gold Star List” of charities.

During 2003, the Foundation assumed full responsibility for managing the after action reports for all local Toys for Tots Coordinators

Despite the continuous worldwide war on terrorism, the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, the mobilization of 35% of Marine Forces Reserves and the Presidential election which siphoned a great deal of America’s disposable income, the 2004 Toys for Tots Campaign was the most successful to date. Local campaigns were conducted in 481 communities – the most extensive coverage to date. Marines distributed more than 19 million toys to 7.5 million needy children. Marine Toys for Tots Foundation supplemented local toy collections with 8.8 million toys valued at \$40.9 million. The Foundation also distributed to local coordinators promotion and support materials valued at more than \$700,000. Importantly, the 2004 campaign enjoyed the most extensive visibility at the national level in the history of the program, due in large part to the support of ABC TV and radio.

During the 2005 Toys for Tots Campaign, local Toys for Tots Coordinators distributed 18.5 million toys to 7.5 million needy children. Concurrently, local campaigns were conducted in 516 communities covering all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico - the most extensive coverage ever. Although the number of toys distributed was fewer than the 2004 campaign, local coordinators reached 7.5 million children; hence the 2005 and 2004 campaigns are the two most successful campaigns in the history of Toys for Tots.

During the 2006 Toys for Tots Campaign, local Toys for Tots Coordinators distributed 19.2 million toys to 7.6 million needy children. Concurrently, local campaigns were conducted in 558 communities covering all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands - the most extensive coverage ever.

Over the 59 years of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program, Marines have distributed more than 370 million toys to more than 173 million needy children. This charitable endeavor has made U.S. Marines the unchallenged leaders in looking after needy children at Christmas. Over its 16 year life span, the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation has supplemented local toy collections with more than 70.2 million toys valued at more than \$387 million; plus has provided promotion and support materials valued at over \$4.7 million.

