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Dear Friends,

The Cherokee County Department of Family and Children Services would like to invite you to participate in our "Secret Santa Program". Last year with the help of sponsors like you, we were able to serve over 400 children. Through your generosity, in the face of some challenges, our program thrived, and our kids received some of the best gifts they have ever had on Christmas morning. Without you, it simply would not have happened.

One of the challenges we must work through together is providing Christmas to the very large number of children in foster care this year. As we head into the fall 2024 season, the number of children in care is approaching 360. Historically, the number of children in care increases as we move into the holiday season. We need more sponsors than ever to be able to meet this great need!

The Secret Santa Program provides gifts for foster children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect, or other issues. The holidays can be a particularly difficult time for the children in care, compounding the trauma they have experienced. Through this program, we aim to meet the needs and wishes of the children and support foster families.

Here is a summary of how the Secret Santa program operates:

1. The children in foster care submit a "wish list" to our office.
2. We then match the sponsors, who have provided us with an estimated budget on the attached form, with the needs and wish lists of these children. You will receive information such as the child's first name, age, sizes, and any special wishes or needs the child may have.
3. The sponsors purchase new gifts and deliver the gifts to the designated Secret Santa warehouse during the drop-off time period. (We will provide the location details to you once you have matched with a child.)
4. Foster Parents and placement resources pick up the gifts at the Secret Santa location in time for "Santa" to deliver them on Christmas morning.

If you would like to become a sponsor for the program, please register online as soon as possible. This year, the form may be submitted completely online at [tinyurl.com/SecretSantaSponsor2024](https://tinyurl.com/SecretSantaSponsor2024). We ask that you complete the registration as soon as possible. This will allow enough time to match you with a foster child. We expect to send the children's wish list to sponsors beginning mid-October. Please feel free to tell your friends, family, and coworkers, and anyone looking for a Christmas charity to support about the program. You may share the link to the online sponsor registration form with, or forward this email to, anyone interested in becoming a sponsor.

Aging Services | Child Support Services | Family & Children Services | Residential Child Care

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There are several ways that you can help us serve our children this year.

1. You may choose to fulfill the complete needs and wish list of a child, or of multiple children.
2. You may donate individual items which will be utilized to fulfill portions of multiple children's needs and wish lists. For example – toys, cars, trucks, games, clothing, dolls, puzzles, books, bedding, etc.
3. You may choose to purchase new items from the AMAZON wish list. The items on the list are popular requests from the children, or items which are used to meet their basic needs such as hygiene products and essential apparel. You may access the Amazon list at [tinyurl.com/CherokeeSanta](http://tinyurl.com/CherokeeSanta).
4. Gift cards and gift certificates are a great way for us to serve our kids, especially our teenagers and college age foster children who prefer to shop for their own items. Walmart, Target, Amazon, Kohls, and Dick's Sporting Goods are preferred options as these stores are popular and carry many of the items our kids request and need. Teenagers also regularly ask for food gift cards such as McDonald's, Chick-fil-A, Starbucks, Burger King, Subway, and Taco Bell. They enjoy cards from places like Stars and Strikes, Movie Theaters, Bowling, Gaming places, etc. Recreational and memberships to places such as the Georgia Aquarium, Children's Museum, Stone Mountain, Tellus Museum, etc. are requests which allow our kids to enjoy fun and educational experiences. Gift cards and gift certificates must be dropped off at our Secret Santa location during the designated drop-off period.
5. Toy drives and special collections organized by groups such as churches, small businesses, neighborhoods, families, schools, daycares, etc. are a wonderful way to come together to participate in meeting the needs and wishes of the children.

We will be happy to answer any questions you may have, so do not hesitate to contact us. All Secret Santa calls should be directed to **770.744.5461**. We ask for your patience in contacting us as our program is run entirely by volunteers. Please email [SecretSantaCherokee@gmail.com](mailto:SecretSantaCherokee@gmail.com), text us, or leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible. For more detailed information, or to print a paper copy of the Sponsor Form, please go to the website listed below.

Sincerely,

Catherine & Robert Diller

Secret Santa Coordinators/Volunteer Secret Santas/Mrs. and Mr. Claus

Phone: 770.744.5461

Email: [secretsantacherokee@gmail.com](mailto:secretsantacherokee@gmail.com)

Website: [www.cherokeesanta.com](http://www.cherokeesanta.com)