

De Blasio Administration and Partners to Give 3,700 New York City Youth Gifts This Holiday Season

December 24, 2021

The holiday initiative led by NYC Service, in collaboration with other City agencies, leverages City government volunteers and private sector partnerships to distribute gifts citywide

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio and Chief Service Officer Laura Rog today announced that holiday wishes for more than 3,700 New York City children and youth were fulfilled by more than 2,000 volunteers from City government, including the Mayor, and the private sector through the seventh annual Secret Snowflake gift-giving initiative.

“Secret Snowflake is a testament to the giving spirit and generosity of New Yorkers. The holidays can be a difficult time for the young people of our city, but New Yorkers have shown once again how powerful we are when we work together to help those that need us,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “I want to thank the tremendous effort of all the volunteers, City agencies and businesses that donated gifts to the youth and children that need them the most.”

Secret Snowflake mobilizes City and private sector employees as volunteers to answer letters from children and youth referred by City agencies. Since 2014, Secret Snowflake has answered the holiday wishes of more than 19,000 New York City children and youth, ranging in age from one month to 18 years old.

“2021 has presented another year of extraordinary challenges, and NYC Service is proud to support youth and their families and caregivers again this holiday season,” said **Chief Service Officer Laura Rog**. “We appreciate the continued commitment from our business partners and City staff in answering more than 3,700 letters this year, and the generosity they have displayed once again. Our city is at its best when residents come together to support each other, and their volunteer efforts are especially important this time of year.”

NYC Service partnered with the Administration for Children's Services (ACS), the Department for the Aging (DFTA), the Department of Education (DOE), the Department of Homeless Services (DHS), the Human Resources Administration (HRA), the Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) and the Mayor's Office to End Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV) to collect letters from children and youth served by their agencies before the holiday season. Secret Snowflake letters typically request necessities, such as clothing, shoes, or a warm coat to get through the winter, as well as toys, books, and other game-based activities.

"The Secret Snowflake initiative is a true example of the spirit of giving and this holiday season thousands of New York City children will be able to have a wonderful, memorable gift thanks to the incredible collaboration and generous donations of kind hearted New Yorkers," said **Administration for Children's Services Commissioner, David A. Hansell**. "I want to thank Mayor de Blasio, NYC Service and everyone who made this year's Secret Snowflake possible for many children served by ACS."

"This holiday season I am thankful to be a part of such a giving and close-knit community," said **Deputy Chancellor of School Climate and Wellness, LaShawn Robinson**. "Secret Snowflake is a reflection of the heart of New York City which is large and overflowing with generosity, especially when it comes to our children. I extend my gratitude and heartfelt thanks to all of the individuals, organizations, and companies who made this initiative possible. Your dedication to our city and youth deserves to be celebrated."

"This is the Department for the Aging's third consecutive holiday season with the NYC Service Secret Snowflake initiative, which has helped us provide gifts to hundreds of kinship families and their children," said **Department for the Aging Commissioner, Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez**. "This year, our Grandparent Resource Center, which supports grandparent caregivers who care for young children and help keep families united, partnered with the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice and the NYC Police Department to distribute nearly 500 gifts to families. This is more than a 75% increase from last year. We are grateful to AlphaSights, Company Ventures, Sinpulse and Minute Media who responded to 160 letters and 87 e-Gift card submissions received from our kinship caregivers and generously provided gifts."

"Secret Snowflake embodies the compassion of our City during the holidays, bringing communities across the five boroughs together to support children and families in need," said **Department of Homeless Services Administrator, Joslyn Carter**. "We are proud to once again join NYC Service, our sister City agencies, and private partners in supporting this great initiative, which will bring joy to hundreds of children experiencing homelessness during this holiday season."

"New Yorkers always come together in challenging times, and Secret Snowflake is a perfect example of the big-hearted generosity of our city's residents and businesses," said **Department of Veterans' Services Commissioner, James Hendon**. "We are appreciative of NYC Service and our private partners in helping to provide a happy holiday for the children of our Veterans and military community."

New York City's private sector is a major contributor to Secret Snowflake. This year, employees from 25 NYC businesses responded to Secret Snowflake letters. NYC Service supplemented their gifts with donations from small and large businesses across the city, valued at nearly \$21,000. AlphaSights donated \$4,999 and Miller Druck provided crucial storage facilities for this year's initiative.

2021 Secret Snowflake Business Volunteers:

- SL Green

- Brookfield Properties
- Chanel
- AXIS Capital
- Neuberger Berman
- NYTimes
- Revlon
- Turner Construction Company
- Deutsche Bank
- A&E Television Networks
- Macy's
- J Crew
- AlphaSights
- American Airlines
- Citi
- Company
- Extend Enterprises Inc.
- Holt Construction
- January Digital
- Loring Consulting Engineers, Inc.
- Prudential Private Capital
- Sard Verbinen
- Sony
- SoundPoint Capital
- A&E Networks

2021 Secret Snowflake In-Kind Partners

- Greenlight Bookstore
- HarperCollins Publishers
- Oracle
- Miller Druck
- Synpulse
- Books Are Magic

“The opportunity to share joy during the holidays has become a special tradition at Company Ventures,” said **Lindsay Siegel, Head of Impact at Company Ventures**. “We look forward to participating in Secret Snowflake each year, offering the startups in our tech community the chance to give back to our city, thanks to NYC Service!”

“Each year Prudential Private Capital has the opportunity to partner with an outstanding charitable organization, and we’re grateful to NYC Service and the Mayor’s Office for our participation in Secret Snowflake this year,” said **Engin Okaya, Managing Director at Prudential Private Capital**. “Our team always looks forward to the opportunity to bring others joy and happiness during the holidays, which has become a welcomed tradition for the New York office of Prudential Private Capital. We particularly appreciate being able to do so this year as COVID-19 continues to impact us and our communities. We fully support organizing this opportunity and giving us the chance to embrace the true spirit of the season of giving and to help those most in need in New York City.”

“As a homegrown New York City company, SL Green is committed to enhancing and contributing to the local communities where we live, work, and operate,” said **Laura Vulaj, Senior Vice President, Director of Sustainability & Hospitality at SL Green Realty Corp.** “We recognize the importance of making a meaningful impact during this time of need. We are proud to partner with NYC Service for the fourth consecutive year and positively impact the lives of New Yorkers this holiday season.”

“As a partner of NYC Service for many years, Citi is thrilled to join Secret Snowflake this holiday season,” said **Stephanie Hochman, Lead, Citi Volunteers.** “Engaging our colleagues in activities that help give back and bring joy to others is central to the spirit of Citi volunteerism, particularly after a year of continued challenges around COVID-19. Citi thanks NYC Service and the Mayor’s Office for organizing this opportunity and for their continuous efforts to make a positive impact on the lives of our city’s most vulnerable populations.”

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