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Thousands of donated stuffed animals are on their way to kids in children's hospitals

Some 6,500 donations to the Care 'n Share Toy Drive were received during the 2024 San Diego County Fair

DEL MAR, Calif. (July 17, 2024) — Leaders of the Care 'n Share Toy Drive — a volunteer effort that collects donated stuffed animals at the San Diego County Fair — on Tuesday began to load up this year's haul into trucks to deliver toys to children's hospitals.

About 6,500 stuffed animals, which guests won playing games at the Fair, were donated this year into bins located at Fairgrounds exits.

Nancy Stoke, Chair of Care 'n Share, was on hand Tuesday to lead the effort, along with representatives from the Foundation for the Children of the Californias, which oversees operations at the Hospital Infantil de las Californias in Tijuana, Mexico.

"I would like to express my gratitude to the community for their generosity in sharing their prizes with brave kids going through challenging times," said Stoke. "We appreciate our 15-year relationship with the San Diego County Fair, as well as the support of so many volunteers that selflessly give their time to this wonderful cause."

For some 15 years now, Stoke has contributed to putting smiles on more than 100,000 children's faces and making their day a little brighter. From its humble beginnings of 150 stuffed animals collected in a wooden toy bin at the 2009 San Diego County Fair, the Care 'n Share Toy Drive has to date distributed over 110,000 new and gently used stuffed animals to kids in children's hospitals in San Diego County and in Tijuana.

"We are grateful to serve our diverse communities through the San Diego County Fair, and our partnership with the Care 'n Share Toy Drive is a special part of our efforts," said Carlene Moore, CEO of the 22nd District Agricultural Association, which produces the Fair. "Together, and thanks to the incredible generosity of our guests, we have helped put smiles on the faces of tens of thousands

of children on both sides of the border. We look forward to continuing to build upon the success of this program as we host San Diego County's biggest and best community celebration again next summer."

In the words of one volunteer, "It is truly an amazing experience seeing kids at the San Diego County Fair donate their stuffed animal prizes, which they fought so hard to win at the Fair, to the Care 'n Share Toy Drive... But what is most remarkable and impressive about this project is that it is the kids at the Fair (not their parents) making the decision to donate their stuffed animals. Time and time again, little 9- and 10-year-old boys and girls heard our announcement about the toy drive and then stopped, thought for a moment, and asked their parents if they could give up their large Cookie Monster, Mario or Pikachu to help another child in need."

For more information on the Care 'n Share Toy Drive, please visit carensharetoydrive.com.

About the 22nd District Agricultural Association

The 22nd District Agricultural Association owns and operates the Del Mar Fairgrounds and is governed by a nine-member board appointed by the governor. Fairgrounds operations are primarily funded by revenues generated by hosting events, the largest being the annual San Diego County Fair. For more information, visit delmarfairgrounds.com.

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