



Los Angeles County
Sheriff's Department

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News Release

SHERIFF LEE BACA AND SANTA CLAUS VISIT CHILDREN'S CENTER

Sheriff Lee Baca, Captain Bondell Golden from the Pitchess Detention Center-South Facility, Acting Captain Bruce Fogarty from the Century Regional Detention Facility, and Captain Henry Romero from East Los Angeles Station joined Santa Claus for their traditional visit to the Belvedere Early Education Center in East Los Angeles on December 11, 2009. The Sheriff and retired Deputy Sheriff Charles "Bobby" Beals, who volunteered to play "Santa" for his 46th consecutive year, handed out toys to more than 100 delighted children.

The children opened the Christmas program by singing "Jingle Bells," followed by other holiday songs.

"Each year we look forward to visiting the Belvedere Early Education Center to interact with these children," said Sheriff Baca. "It is indeed a joy to see the smiles on their faces as Santa Claus presents them with handcrafted gifts provided through the effort of the staff and inmates at our jail facilities. I was thrilled to have the pleasure of reliving the excitement of Christmas through a child's eyes and experiencing their enthusiasm as they sang and danced for us."

Given to the girls were some of the 3,500 dolls handcrafted by female inmates at the Century Regional Detention Facility. The doll program began over 50 years ago as a work project for women in the Los Angeles County jail and remains a tradition today, thanks to the generous donations of materials by community members and Department personnel. The young boys at the center received handmade wooden toys. These cars, trucks, and helicopters were part of approximately 200 toys handcrafted by male inmates incarcerated at the Pitchess Detention Center. The remaining dolls and toys crafted by the inmates are distributed to underprivileged or physically-challenged children throughout Los Angeles County.

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Photos available upon request.