



Season of Hope

& Project Toys 4 Teens FAQ's

What is Season of Hope? Who does it benefit?

Season of Hope is a Toy Drive specifically to collect toys for children **in our local community – children living in Sussex and Northern Warren County**. Families do not have to be Project Self-Sufficiency participants to use the Toy Shop. They just need to register in person with proof of residency, child custody, and financial need. **Many families in our community struggle to provide gifts for the holidays**. All kinds of families struggle with holiday expenses; not just single and teen parents, but working two-parent families, grandparents raising grandchildren and others.

Who runs the Season of Hope Toy Drive & Toy Shop?

Season of Hope is a **community partnership**, led by Project Self-Sufficiency with the support of our partners: *Pass It Along, Toys for Tots, the New Jersey Herald, Selective Insurance, Sussex Honda, Intercar Mercedes Benz, First Hope Bank, The Printing Center, the Sussex County Chamber of Commerce, Service Electric, The Chatterbox, Off Shore Marine, WSUS 102.3, Max 106.3 and WNNJ 103.7.*

How many families does Season of Hope help?

In 2016, **over 1,000 families** used the Season of Hope Toy Shop; **1,718 children (under 12)** and **576 teens (age 12 to 18)** received toys through the Toy Shop.

How many toys are you hoping to collect through Season of Hope?

Our **2017 Goal** is to collect **20,000 toys** through Season of Hope.

How do families get toys through the Season of Hope Toy Shop?

Parents register in advance and come to the Toy Shop on designated shopping dates. Children are not permitted in the shop, but childcare is provided for those who need it. Each family is able to choose a set number of items per child at no cost (this number is determined by how many children register and how many items we have in stock). This toy shop is **unique** because parents get to have the experience of “shopping” for and selecting the gifts they want for their children. The toy shop is set up in a beautiful, welcoming atmosphere where parents are treated with dignity.

Why do you need cash donations?

Cash and **gift card** donations are also greatly needed – these allow our volunteers to purchase items to supplement the Toy Shop inventory (*Example: We get mostly donations of toys for young children but a high number of families register to shop for teens or vice versa*).

Isn't there a better way to help these families than just giving them toys?

It's not just about the toys; it's what the toys represent. Having gifts to open on Christmas morning helps struggling and isolated families feel respected, cared for, and part of a community. It lets them know they are not forgotten. They *matter*. This can be the spark of hope to help a family keep moving forward on a rocky path to self-sufficiency, or for a scared and struggling individual to find the courage to reach out for help for the first time. The rest of the year at PSS is devoted to education, job training and family strengthening programs to help families build a foundation for long term success. For some, visiting the Toy Shop is the first step on this journey and may be the only way they get connected to the services they need.

Questions? Contact Project Self-Sufficiency at **(973) 940-3500** or visit www.projectsselfsufficiency.org.