

# City Service Groups Unite to Bring Holiday Spirit to Youth

Dedicated to serving the needs of children through fighting hunger, improving literacy and offering guidance, the Kiwanis Club of Asbury Park said its 2022 Holiday Toy Drive exceeded expectations, providing food, toys and hope to hundreds of families and children.

"Community Karma and Kiwanis Club of Asbury Park joined forces to make 2022 a memorable holiday season for worthy Asbury Park families," said Cori Lewin, president of the Asbury Park Kiwanis Club. "We share a vision with our incredible partner, Community Karma – small actions by an incredibly supportive community can positively impact so many in BIG ways."

Countless in-person functions, lively fundraisers and decorative collection boxes across town inspired record setting toys, cash and gift cards donations. Events at Georgie's, Paradise, Kim Marie's, Johnny Mac's House of Spirits, Happy Belly Strong, Stone Pony, Convention Hall – and so many others – engaged and entertained residents and visitors alike.

In addition, more than 160 deserving Asbury Park families were "sponsored" in advance to

ensure they had the best holidays ever (about 50 more families were incorporated on the day of the toys distribution event).

Additional support was given to toy distribution events sponsored by other local groups, including the Asbury Park Little League and Langosta Lounge.

"The entire process was designed to bring holiday gifts to families as well as build connections between the families and our two organizations," co-chair Michelle Grezner said. "It was great to see familiar faces and meet new families. Kiwanis Club of Asbury Park has been holding events to build relationships – the toy drive was a great culmination of the year."

Amanda Fitzpatrick and Blackbird Community Commons hosted the distribution event.

"It's been an honor to work with Kiwanis to continue this long standing Asbury Park Holiday tradition of giving back. Community Karma is excited for continued partnership with Kiwanis," said Celia Cattani, founder of Community Karma.

Kiwanis Club of Asbury Park is a volunteer-driven, non-denominational, not-for-profit 501(c)(4) organization that empowers people and businesses



A toy distribution event was held at Blackbird Community Commons in Asbury Park just before Christmas complete with food, Santa and games for the children.

to improve the community in which they live and work by making lasting differences in the lives of children.

Community Karma is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization whose mission is to increase the level of compassion and community within Asbury Park. It works with local programs to provide supplemental fundraising and program management support.

## Asbury Park Library Events

Events at the Asbury Park Public Library include toddler storytimes as well as adult computer basics.

Join the little one in your life for stories and songs. This free event is geared toward ages two to four although all ages are welcome. Adult supervision is

required. The storytime and sensory play is scheduled in the Bradley Room Jan. 23 at noon.

Space is limited call 732-774-4221 to register.

Adult computer basics will be taught every other Monday at 5 p.m. for ages 18 and older at 5 p.m.