

A Toy Story

The Paterson Toy Sale, Betsy Haley – Toy Sale Coordinator
Santa and the Ridgewood Moving Reindeers.....

In 1984 on a sunny fall day a small group of volunteers from Bergen Highlands United Methodist Church in Upper Saddle River were volunteering at a Saturday clothing sale in Paterson at CUMAC, the Center of United Methodist Aid to the Community, a food and clothing pantry. In a corner of the small church facility they found a box of donated stuffed animals and various other children's toys. Across the street from the church was the Paterson Boys Club. Children ...toys ... the Paterson Toy Sale was born! Peter Thornton, the director of the Boys Club willingly donated the gym for that first December Saturday morning event.

In the first years, the sale was only church sponsored with toys being donated by church members and their friends. But good news travels fast and ten years later, the communities of Saddle River, Upper Saddle River the Montvale School PTO, Bergen County Juniors, the Girl Scouts, and many other individuals from neighboring towns were donating toys and volunteering to help out on sale day. Rob and Cindy Myer of Ridgewood Moving Services came to the rescue one year when donations topped our station wagon and SUV abilities to transport toys. Ridgewood Moving Services has been volunteering their trucks and employees for 25 years.

2017 is the 33rd year of the Paterson Toy Sale, which always occurs on the first Friday and Saturday in December. It has grown from a three table, two hour event for children to a two day multi-thousand toy event requiring two moving vans for delivery. Friday night is "Kid Night". Only kids are allowed to shop and if you volunteer that night, it is some of the most fun you'll ever have! Saturday morning is open to the community. Children can shop for their entire family for \$2.00. Parents spend \$10.00 and walk away with toys for three children. All proceeds are equally donated to CUMAC and the Boys and Girls Club (new name, same director). There are no expenses. All work is done by volunteers and every toy is donated by people who simply want to reach out at Christmas time to make a difference in a child's life.

On a personal note, the Paterson Toy Sale is one of the best days of my year. It is what Christmas is all about.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holiday's!!



Interesting Toy Sale Facts:

- ✚ Bergen Highlands United Methodist Church created and has sponsored this event for 29 years. Whether volunteering on sale days, sorting toys during pre event days or donating toys, every member has participated while attending BHUMC.
- ✚ Pat and Ken Geary, Fred and Pat Ledlow and Lorraine Meyer have never missed a toy sale in 29 years.
- ✚ Peter Thornton of the Boys and Girls Club donated their gym for the first toy sale and has continued this support with staff as well as busing children to the event from other parts of the city for 29 years.
- ✚ CUMAC has been providing volunteers from within the organization and from other local churches for 29 years.
- ✚ Upper Saddle River residents have been donating toys for 27 years.
- ✚ The Montvale Public Schools have been donating toys for over 20 years.
- ✚ Ridgewood Moving Services headed by Cindy Myer has been donating time, labor and trucks for 20 years.
- ✚ Girl Scout troops from Upper Saddle River and teens from local schools have donated their time for 10 years.
- ✚ Every year hundreds of people contribute to this effort in one way or another. And every year a new toy sale volunteer becomes addicted to the event.
- ✚ Money is not the mission. We never make a lot of money. But what we make we give to The Boys and Girls Club and CUMAC. This year we made almost \$2800.00
- ✚ We have experienced blizzards, rain storms, and gigantic traffic jams. But like the USPS and the ancient Persians, “neither snow nor rain nor heat nor darkness will stay us from accomplishing our appointed course with all speed.” And miraculously, we do.
- ✚ It’s always messy, but it’s magic!