



## Ask the CEO



### Dear Colleagues—

As one of the very newest members of the County family, I want to let all of you know how pleased I am to be a part of this organization. I have worked for 37 years in government service and have had the opportunity to be a City Manager in Riverside, Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Thank you for the warm greeting many of you have already extended to me.

Stepping into the County of Orange has shown me both similarities and differences between this organization and others where I have previously worked. As I get to know this organization, I expect to ask a lot of questions and absorb a lot of input. I want to visit many of our locations around the county, and I look forward to meeting County employees who are on the front lines providing the many services that we are responsible for delivering.

I thank the Board of Supervisors for giving me this opportunity to serve as County Executive Officer. It is, indeed, an honor. I also appreciate Jim Ruth for the information

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## Operation Santa Claus: A 42-Year Labor of Love

Operation Santa Claus was established in 1962. That year, 360 needy children received toys. Last year, 42,000 toys were distributed. What began as a small attempt to meet the needs of a handful of children has become a major event for the community and the County family. This year the toy drive starts November 29 and runs through December 23.

In addition to Operation Santa Claus, the program has expanded to include Senior Santa and Friends, which serves needy seniors and disabled adults. Last year Senior Santa and Friends served 1,136 adults.

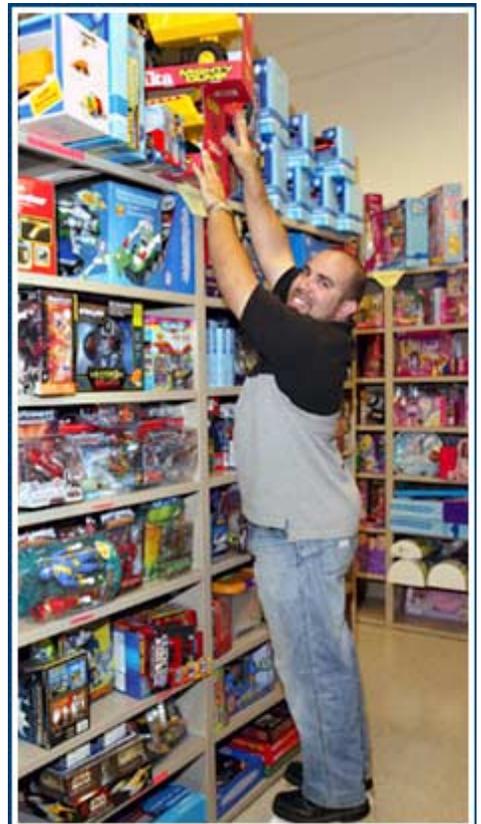
Operation Santa Claus is coordinated and maintained by County employees; mostly volunteers, from Social Services Agency and numerous other departments. Various community volunteers, businesses, and volunteer organizations join County employees in this annual tradition.

“This is the County’s home-grown program and has been supported by its employees and other volunteers for years,” said Debbie Currutt, Strategic Planning/Operation Santa Claus. “The program has blossomed through word of mouth and with the assistance of a variety of community organizations. We also owe our success

to the annual support of the entire County family.”

The volunteers have a variety of duties including inventory of donations, and organizing and stocking the gifts. Each year they showcase the donations similar to a holiday store. Once all the gifts are displayed, the “store” is open

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**Gerry Morales, volunteer from SSA, stocks toys received for Operation Santa Claus in holiday store.**

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and guidance he's shared with me during the transition period. I've known Jim for many years and have always held him in high regard. My goal is to continue the good work that he's initiated and then to take us, as a team, to the next level.

I have heard much about the dedication and high work ethic of County employees. You've faced many challenges in the last several years. Your positive attitude and focus on providing good customer service to the residents of Orange County and to the other departments you serve within the County organization are already clear to me. I greatly respect what you do, and I'm happy to be a part of this team. I hope you will continue to use this column's email address to share your thoughts with me or ask questions.

**UNITED WAY  
COUNTY OF ORANGE**



**\$1,000,000  
COUNTY  
CAMPAIGN  
GOAL**

**TOTAL FUNDS  
RAISED TO-DATE  
\$85,891**

**\$15,019 KICKOFF  
\$20,511**

**SPECIAL EVENTS  
TO-DATE**

*(Continued from page 1)*

to foster parents and families of needy children. This "store" atmosphere allows them to easily sort through the donations and handpick the appropriate gifts for their children.

Each year gifts and cash contributions are donated at drop-off sites throughout the county. Donations come from kindergarten children, college students, community organizations and local businesses. The most requested gifts include CD players, sports equipment, watches and cosmetics.

Operation Santa Claus is a collaborative effort made possible with the support of the Fire Authority's Spark of Love campaign and the U.S. Marine Corps' Toys for Tots campaign.

The program, approved by the Board of Supervisors, is the only official County holiday toy drive. The goal is to provide gifts and toys to needy children in transition who are abused, neglected, physically or mentally challenged

or homeless.

Although collecting toys and gifts has become easier through the years, the need for volunteers to help in the holiday store remains a challenge.

"We highly encourage County employees to participate in our holiday store," said Jane Dawson, Volunteer Coordinator. "Although we are fortunate to receive boxes of gifts, we always need warm bodies to help shelve them. Volunteers may work in our store Monday through Friday either from 8:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. or from 12:45 p.m. to 5 p.m."

If you would like information on how to conduct a gift drive or make a contribution to the program, contact Debbie Curnutt at 714.825.3159. If you need information about working at the Operation Santa Claus holiday store, call Jane Dawson at 714.834.7440.

Outgoing CEO James D. Ruth (right) receives a resolution from Board Chairman Tom Wilson at the Oct. 26 Board meeting. The resolution noted the CEO's 47 years of public service, including his 21 years at the City of Anaheim which culminated in spending the last 11 of those years as City Manager. That experience helped him as CEO to establish regular meetings and communications with the cities. The resolution read, in part, "his managerial insight and organizational knowledge led this County through a much-needed reorganization that reinforces proactive, focused attention to policy issues, ensures greater accountability, and maximizes the organization's management strengths. . . His foresight into the County's

future needs led him to develop the Leadership Academy, succession planning and the CEO Management Committee." October 29 was CEO Ruth's last day with the County.





**United  
Way**



Chairman Tom Wilson (left) and Vice Chairman Jim Silva serve breakfast to County employees at the Board of Supervisors' United Way Pancake Breakfast. Nearly 300 people attended the October 19 early morning activity.

Even Bonnie and Clyde parked their ride and visited the United Way Car Show. The October 21 event was part of the fundraising activities at the 1300 S. Grand site's recent United Way carnival. The event brought in approximately \$8,700.



## ANNUAL OPEN ENROLLMENT

County employees will have an opportunity to change benefit elections for 2005 starting November 1 through the 26. By the end of October all employees will receive a package containing a personal benefit enrollment summary and a benefit enrollment guide. All benefit elections made during open enrollment will be effective January 1, 2005. For more information please call the Benefits Center at 1.866.325.2345 or go online <https://www2.benefitsweb.com/countyoforange.html>.



**35 Years**

**Lon Hanson**  
RDMD

**30 Years**

**Susan Anderson**  
District Attorney

**Beth Heard**  
HCA

**Susan Parnell**  
SSA

**Bobbie Howard**  
SSA

**Sharon Neebe**  
TTC

**Robert Wilson**  
RDMD

**Max Adams**  
RDMD

**Lucille Cruz**  
Public Library

**Jose Gonzalez**  
JWA

**Charles Rosas**  
RDMD

**Patricia Taylor**  
RDMD

**25 Years**

**Michael Hamari**  
Assessor

**Deborah Gray**  
Assessor

**Sandy Saiz**  
Assessor

**Michelle Lewis**  
Auditor-Controller

**Carvel Eliason**  
District Attorney

**Laura Guzman**  
HCA

**Stacey Kennedy**  
HCA

**Neelaksi Wijesinghe**  
HCA

**Armida Ocker**  
HCA

**Lisa Little**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Guillermo Illos**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Jerry O'leary**  
Probation

**William Hansen**  
Probation

**Stephen Snyder**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Jennifer Dang**  
SSA

**Debora Rodriguez**  
SSA

**Jessica Ha**  
SSA

**Julie Martin**  
SSA

**Barbara Robinson**  
SSA

**Judith Baca**  
SSA

**Laura Zadeh**  
SSA

**Frieda Hampton-Ruple**  
RDMD

**Henry Brown**  
RDMD

**Elaine Chenard**  
Public Library

**Bernie Nungaray**  
JWA

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