



Press Release

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Christmas Tree Lighting to assist military families

TOMS RIVER, NJ, Nov 28– Project Little Soldier, a program to add joy to the holidays for the children of deployed military personnel, will benefit from the Friday, Dec. 7 Toms River Township Christmas Tree Lighting.

Downtown Toms River (the Toms River Business Improvement District) has arranged to provide a toy, check, and gift card collection point in front of Toms River’s Town Hall, on Washington Street, all day Dec. 7. “We hope that Toms River South High School students will drop off contributions during their late morning lunches, employees located Downtown will drop off contributions during their lunch, and others will contribute on the way home and when they come to the Christmas Tree Lighting,” explained Frank Capone, Chairman of the Board of Downtown Toms River. “The holidays are a time for sharing, and this is a great way to combine our celebration with taking care of the families of those who are taking care of us,” Capone commented.

The organization’s involvement stems from a Channel 7 report that Project Little Soldier, a project of American Recreational Military Services (ARMS), was several hundred toys short of being able to fill all the requests that it has from the families of deployed military personnel. “I saw that news item, reported from our Toms River Armory, and immediately went to our Executive Committee for permission to help them out,” explained Michael Redpath, Executive Director of Downtown Toms River. “They were absolutely excited over the opportunity to support Project Little Soldier.”

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Project Little Soldier needs unwrapped toys, gift cards, and cash contributions in order to fulfill several hundred requests from military families in the region. The gift cards and cash are used to purchase specific items requested by children. Checks should be made out to American Recreational Military Services (ARMS). ARMS, a 501 (c)(3) Public Charity was founded in 2003 by a group of grass roots volunteers who wanted to give something back to the military and their families. In a matter of months, this small organization had grown from just a handful to more than 325 volunteers throughout the tri-state area. It is based in Red Bank, NJ. The Project Little Soldier web site is <http://www.supportarms.org/littlesoldier.html>.

The Christmas Tree Lighting will center around the Toms River Town Hall courtyard off Washington Street. They start with favorite holiday songs by the Ron & Bill Show. Holiday characters will be greeting attendees with candy canes. An Elf balloon artist will create fun creatures for the kids. At 6:00 p.m., the Sandy Sasso Swinging Big Band will perform a holiday concert Mancini Hall at the Ocean County Library adjacent to Town Hall. Santa is to arrive on a Toms River Fire Co. #1 fire truck at 7:00 p.m. for the tree lighting. Fire Co. #1 will have photos with Santa at Town Hall, sell hot chocolate and cookies, and sell horse and buggy rides on Washington Street in front of the Library. Visitors are sure to enjoy the many activities abounding at this evening's event. The evening is sponsored by WJRZ, which will be on hand adding to the fun, and New Jersey Natural Gas. Downtown parking is free after 5 p.m. compliments of The Toms River Township Parking Authority.

Information about all of the Downtown Toms River programs can be found at www.DowntownTomsRiver.com or by calling 732-341-8738.

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