

# Mayor Adams Announces Record Number of Gifts Given this Holiday Season to Vulnerable Youth Through City's "Secret Snowflake" Initiative

December 27, 2022

*Initiative Engaged Highest Number of Corporate and Public Sector Volunteers in History*

**New York** – New York City Mayor Eric Adams announced today that NYC Service has helped facilitate the donation of more than 5,500 individualized gifts given to vulnerable youth in transitional housing, foster care, shelters, family justice centers, and Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers this holiday season through the Secret Snowflake in-kind donation initiative — serving the highest number of children in the program's decades-long history. The program also engaged the most private sector businesses to date, with 32 businesses engaging a record number of 3,500 employees as volunteers.

"Serving those in need is part of what it means to be a New Yorker, and during the cold winter and holiday season, our administration worked together with the private sector to send a warm welcome to our newest New Yorkers and spread joy to youth in need," said **Mayor Adams**. "I share my gratitude to the thousands of employees from the private and public sectors who answered Secret Snowflake holiday wishes of 5,500 youth in transitional housing, shelters, and humanitarian relief centers, and to the corporate partners that mobilized their workforce in the spirit of service."

"Secret Snowflake exemplifies how New Yorkers come together to support and lend holiday cheer to others in the toughest of times," said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Initiatives Sheena Wright**. "Thank you to the generous, record number of volunteers for their acts of service. Together with the business sector, diplomatic community, and dedicated city agency staff, we delivered joy and comfort to thousands of children and their families this holiday season."

"The holiday season is a time to celebrate, reflect, and practice gratitude, but it can also be a very challenging time for New Yorkers most in need. Secret Snowflake's mission to bring joy and holiday spirit to some of our city's most vulnerable populations through service and engagement exemplifies what NYC Service does year-round for our city," said **New York City Chief Engagement Officer Betsy MacLean**. "I am thrilled that NYC Service, their corporate partners, and city staff reached over 5,500 young people and made their holiday season merrier this year."

"Part of being a New Yorker is showing up for one another in times of need. This continues to be a year like no other, and these acts of service from our volunteers will brighten 5,500 young peoples' holiday, including

welcoming our city's recent children and families seeking asylum," said **New York City Chief Service Officer Laura Rog**. "Thank you to the private businesses and city staff for believing in the power of service and coming together once again for our neighbors and fellow New Yorkers."

NYC Service has scaled Secret Snowflake to its widest reach through a cross-sector collaboration between city agencies serving youth, private-sector businesses, the diplomatic community, and mayoral staff. This year's program benefitted more than 5,500 youth, ages 0-18 years old, served by seven different city agencies, including the New York City Administration for Children's Services, the New York City Department of Homeless Services, the New York City Department of Education, the New York City Department for the Aging, the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender Based Violence, the New York City Human Resources Administration, and NYC Health + Hospitals. NYC Service coordinated the intake of 5,547 letters from youth — a 48 percent increase compared to the previous year. Youth letter requests vary based on interest and typically include necessities, such as clothing, shoes, or a warm coat, as well as toys, books, and other game-based activities.

Mobilizing the private sector in service is key to scaling the in-kind program's reach. This year, 32 businesses — from large scale corporations to small business — united in service to meet the program's largest volume of letter requests to date. Each business partner engaged between three and 900 employees to answer letters with a "wish" from youth between the ages of one month and 18 years old. Additionally, several businesses contributed bulk donations of books and toys.

The Mayor's Office for International Affairs engaged the diplomatic and consular community in supporting more than 510 youth across the five boroughs.

The private sector businesses that contributed to Secret Snowflake for the 2022 winter initiative included:

- A&E Television Networks
- Allen & Co.
- AlphaSights
- Axis
- The Bliss Group
- Books Are Magic
- Chanel
- Citi
- Company Ventures
- Deutsche Bank
- Extend Enterprises, Inc.
- FGS Global
- Greenlight Bookstore
- HarperCollins
- Holt Construction

- J.Crew Group
- January Digital
- Loring Consulting Engineers, Inc.
- Macy's
- Miller Druck
- Natixis
- Neuberger Berman
- New York City Football Club
- Prudential Private Capital
- Revlon
- SL Green Realty
- Sound Point Capital
- Synpulse
- The NY Times Company
- Triumvirate Environmental
- Turner Construction

"It is incredibly heartening to see Secret Snowflake expand and grow over the years while truly exemplifying the holiday spirit and unparalleled compassion of New Yorkers," said **New York City Department of Social Services Commissioner Gary P. Jenkins**. "This holiday season the city reached a record number of young New Yorkers in need through this initiative, and we are very grateful to NYC Service, our partner agencies, and private partners for making this possible. As this exceptional effort continues to bring joy to thousands of New Yorkers in need, we are also reminded of the vital role our communities and private partners play in supporting our vulnerable neighbors during the holidays and beyond."

"We are thrilled that this year's Secret Snowflake initiative delivered a record number of holiday gifts to children and teens across New York City," said **New York City Administration for Children's Services Commissioner Jess Dannhauser**. "On behalf of the Administration for Children's Services, I want to thank Mayor Adams, NYC Service, and, of course, all of the kind-hearted New Yorkers who helped make the holiday season extra special for 5,500 young people."

"The holiday season can be difficult for many families, and I am so touched by the immense generosity of our partners who have made the dreams of so many of our students come true," said **New York City Department of Education Chancellor David C. Banks**. "The Secret Snowflake initiative embodies the New York spirit of community and has certainly brightened the season for our families."

"Every year, the Secret Snowflake initiative has made the holidays brighter for the kinship caregivers who participate in our Grandparent Resource Center," said **New York City Department for the Aging Commissioner Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez**. "This year, volunteers and donors went above and beyond, and provided more gifts to participating youth than ever before. I would like to thank NYC Service and its partners for helping spread the spirit of generosity this holiday season."

"ENDGBV has participated in NYC Service's Secret Snowflake program for over 15 years," said **New York City Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV) Commissioner Cecile Noel**. "Our Bronx Family Justice Center Operations Manager Sandra M. Mejia directed this year's efforts, which involved answering over 300 Secret Snowflake letters and presenting toys to 336 children across our network of borough-based Family Justice Centers. We are grateful for this wonderful program and look forward to it every year knowing how much joy and happiness it brings to survivors and their children during this season of giving."

"Secret Snowflake is a meaningful chance for the city of New York to work with the world's largest diplomatic community to bring joy to young New Yorkers," said **Mayor's Office for International Affairs Commissioner Edward Mermelstein**. "We are thankful to missions to the United Nations, our consulates, and the United Nations for providing gifts, and showing kindness to more than 510 children and families this holiday season."

"The Department of Homeless Services looks forward to the Secret Snowflake initiative every year and is grateful to be a partner," said **New York City Department of Homeless Services Administrator Joslyn Carter**. "This public and private partnership is rooted in care and compassion for our city's most vulnerable youth. Reaching more families than ever before, Secret Snowflake is providing thousands of youth happiness and joy during this holiday season."

"The significant growth of the Secret Snowflake initiative exemplifies the commitment the private sector has in partnering with the city to fulfill the wish lists of the city's most vulnerable youth," said **New York City Human Resources Administration Administrator Lisa Fitzpatrick**. "We are truly grateful to the small and large businesses, and international community, for their gifts and in-kind contributions this holiday season. Secret Snowflake is a testament to the power and importance of public and private partnerships."

"We are delighted to help fulfill the holiday wishes of our youngest guests at the city's Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers," said **Shereen Zaid, senior director of logistics, New York City Health + Hospitals**. "Secret Snowflake gifts provide a warm New York City welcome to these children, who have traveled many difficult miles with their families before finding the compassionate care and comforts that our humanitarian relief centers ensure. Thank you to Mayor Adams, our generous business partners, and the thousands of volunteers who have extended the spirit of giving and holiday cheer to children and families seeking a better life in our country."

"Citi is a proud supporter of NYC Service, and our volunteers are passionate about participating in Secret Snowflake to help make a positive impact in our local community by fulfilling wishes to bring joy to New York City children and youth during the holiday season," said **Stephanie Hochman, lead, Citi Volunteers**.

"We at Miller Druck believe deeply in Secret Snowflake's mission to spread holiday cheer to the most vulnerable youth in our city," said **Barbara Cohen, president, Miller Druck**. "It was our privilege to turn our

facility, usually filled only with marble and stone, into a distribution center for the gifts that will bring joy and necessities to the youth in need. We are grateful for the opportunity to provide much needed help."

"Throughout the year, our teammates donated thousands of hours to give back to our communities," said **Sarah Engel, president, January Digital**. "This is the second year our New York City employee team got together to participate in Secret Snowflake. It is a day that the entire company looks forward to, filled with shared purpose and deep connections. NYC Service does a phenomenal job of making it clear, easy, and impactful for businesses to participate. At January Digital, we firmly believe it is all of our responsibility to support and protect our most vulnerable neighbors. We are proud and thankful for the opportunity to connect so meaningfully with children across the boroughs through Secret Snowflake."

"Secret Snowflake was a perfect way to get our team into the holiday and giving spirit. I was so proud that we had over 20 people wanting to participate; we also made a night out of it with a gift wrapping party here at the office! This will be an annual tradition for us moving forward," said **Alicia Aniello, General Manager – New York, Triumvirate Environmental**.

"The work being done by these agencies is incredibly important in children's lives and deserves broader community support, especially during the holidays," said **Mike Varney, Vice President of Finance and Operations at Extend**, a NYC-based financial technology company. "Our team finds Secret Snowflake to be meaningful and rewarding, and we look forward to continuing our participation in a program that brings happiness to kids who need it most."

"Loring Consulting Engineers, Inc. is honored to play a role in the Secret Snowflake initiative for the 2nd consecutive year," said **Oneil Gayle, PE, Chief Operating Officer at Loring Consulting Engineers, Inc.** "The opportunity to give back during the holidays is a special and welcomed tradition amongst our staff. We are proud to do our part by partnering with our valued clients, NYC Service's agencies and the mayor's office in this effort."

"Each year Prudential Private Capital has the opportunity to partner with an outstanding charitable organization, and we're grateful to NYC Service and the mayor's office for our participation in Secret Snowflake and proud to be a partner for a second year in a row," said **Engin Okaya, managing director, Prudential Private Capital – New York Office**. "Our team always looks forward to the opportunity to bring others joy and happiness during the holidays, which has become a welcomed tradition for the New York office of Prudential Private Capital. We appreciate the importance and impact this kind of giving has and are thankful for the chance to embrace the true spirit of the season of giving by helping those most in need in New York City."

"During such a challenging year for so many youth, Deutsche Bank employees fulfilled 1,000 Secret Snowflake letters from the Department of Homeless Services. We commend NYC Service and our employees' generosity

for making this happen,” said **Alessandra DiGiusto**, head of corporate social responsibility Americas and executive director, Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation.

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**Media Contact**

Press Office  
(212) 788-2958