

Firethorne asks community to 'Stuff the Sleigh of Katy'

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COURTESY: FIRETHORNE SPECIAL VISIT: Lucy Schuler, 3, visits with Santa. Photo: / HC

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WANT TO HELP?

What: Stuff the Sleigh of Katy

When: Tuesday, Dec. 9, is the deadline to donate

Where: Firethorne Visitor Center, 28100 N. Firethorne Road

Information: Call 281-693-0003 or visit the website at stuffthesleighofkaty.org/

"Mommy, this is the best Christmas ever!" cried **Zach Henderson**

That was last Dec. 25, and the Katy boy was in a bed at [Texas Children's Hospital](#) in the [Medical Center](#), his seven-year-old body battling leukemia with chemotherapy treatments. What made his Christmas special was seeing his mother, **Meagan**, bringing him gifts he'd asked for from Santa Claus, compliments of the first "Stuff the Sleigh of Katy" holiday toy drive.

The project also granted the wish lists of Zach's three siblings, his mother said. "You should have seen their eyes light up on Christmas Day. My entire family finally saw some joy."

The second annual Stuff the Sleigh of Katy toy drive is accepting donations of gifts or money to purchase gifts through Tuesday, Dec. 6, at the [Firethorne Visitor Center](#), 28100 N. Firethorne Road.

"You can stop by the center to select a 'sleigh' gift card that has one wish list item on it from a young cancer patient or their brother or sister," explained Firethorne resident **Garrett Ashmore**, who launched the project last year with his wife, **Kelli** "Donors, whether individuals or companies, may purchase one or more of these gifts to fulfill that child's holiday wish."

Pediatric cancer patients and their families will also enjoy a private holiday party hosted by Stuff the Sleigh of Katy.

In 2010, said Ashmore, "This was a crazy idea we had on the back of a napkin." The idea became a reality with help from the Firethorne homeowners' association, led by **Katie Sparkman**, and 50 children received presents last Christmas. Individual and corporate donations also provided groceries for each family to cook a Christmas meal and gasoline cards to help offset travel costs involved with going to the hospital and doctor visits.

Since last year's toy drive, the Texas Children's Hospital West Campus has opened at 18200 Katy Freeway, and Stuff the Sleigh of Katy has set its sights on serving 100 children associated with the west campus.

Last year, said [Meagan Henderson](#), because Zach was in the hospital, she and his sister attended Stuff the Sleigh's private party, where Country Park Portraits took photographs with guests and a professional Santa Claus. This year, with Zach in remission, Henderson hopes her whole family will attend the party, including her husband, **Rontrell**, two twin boys and the latest addition, a month-old daughter. "With five kids, and only one of them being sick and diagnosed with cancer, it puts a strain on the entire family," she said.

Ashmore, a 1994 graduate of [Katy High School](#), said, "We put ourselves in their shoes and realized that a fundamental piece of this is that one child's cancer affects everyone in the family. As the parents of two healthy children, we wanted to do something to provide these kiddos and their families with as joy-filled and worry-free a Christmas as possible."

For additional information, call the [Firethorne Community Association](#) at 281-693-0003 or visit the website at stuffthesleighofkaty.org/. Those who would like to donate may send checks to Stuff the Sleigh c/o Voice Runner Inc. 2501 S. Mason Road, Ste. 260, Katy, Texas 77450.

Stuff the Sleigh toy drive and holiday party sponsors include: Texas Children's Hospital; Voice Runner Inc.; Firethorne; [Keller Williams Premier Realty Katy](#); Target; the "Pay It Forward" project of the first-graders of [Kilpatrick Elementary School](#) in Katy ISD; Country Park Portraits; McFatridge, Baker & Schmidt; [Chasewood Bank](#); Capital Benefits; Academy Sports & Outdoors; Chuy's Mexican Food; Chick-fil-A, and Deloitte & Touche.