

Acacia Claus

Introduction:

Acacia Claus is an annual toy drive conducted by individual chapters and colonies of Acacia Fraternity. These toy drives support charitable organizations within the local community or larger regional organizations. Many chapters work with organizations that specifically benefit less fortunate youth and families.



Good luck and Happy Holidays!

Have fun with this event! It is a fun and easy way to make a positive impact in your community. Remember that this event is ultimately for the benefit of the individuals receiving the donations. If you have additional questions regarding the event, please contact Acacia Fraternity International Headquarters at communications@acacia.org or 317-872-8210.

Scheduling Acacia Claus:

1. Set a date (and do it NOW):

Choose a weekend between November 15th and December 15th to volunteer and collect items. Set aside at least a four hour period mid-day for item collection. A longer duration for collection is possible with enough volunteers.

2. Choose an organization to support:

Talk with local or national organizations that receive donations for the holidays. Pairing with local organizations has advantages because this partnership can last year-round through additional activities, and continued partnerships will increase the total impact your chapter can have in the community. Ask your benefitting organization to volunteer with you and share the experience!

3. Solicit your toy drive event to local businesses/stores:

The best stores to talk to are those with heavy foot traffic that sell large volumes of toys, games, clothes, books, and sporting equipment. Some examples include:

- Walmart, K-Mart, Costco, Sports Authority, clothing stores, local toy stores, etc.

Local businesses are great partners as you'll receive support from local community members. The more locations at which you collect items, the more successful your event will be!

Scheduling your toy drive:

1. Schedule a phone call or face-to-face meeting with the store director or manager.
2. During your meeting, explain the event, which organization it is benefitting, and how their store would benefit by participating.
3. Become familiar with the store's policies and procedures for item drives. Save all documents.
4. Ensure your event is on the store calendar. Exchange contact information with the manager and others as needed. Follow up one week prior to the event with more details, questions, and requests.
5. Partner with the store to advertise Acacia Claus to its shoppers and the surrounding community.

Keep in mind:

Some stores will have specific instructions that you must follow. Fill out any of the necessary paperwork. Work with the store director to ensure that all of the event details are clearly articulated and that you are adequately prepared to host an item drive at their location.

Preparing for the toy drive:

1. Advertise and market your event to the community:

Creating awareness of Acacia Claus is necessary to have a positive impact in the community. Use the weeks prior to the event to promote the event and kick start your item collection. Here are some helpful methods to raise awareness for the toy drive:

- Flyer and signage distribution around the community, university, and business district
- Utilize social media, especially Twitter and Facebook, to reach larger audiences
- Challenge local businesses and organizations to raise the most items before December
- Contact community leaders to engage them in recruiting donors

All announcements should include dates, times, locations, and the benefitting organization.

It is also recommended to suggest what types of items to donate at the toy drive.

2. Set a goal for items collected:

Set a goal, share it with others, and make sure your volunteers are motivated to reach that goal. 500 items, 750 items, and 1,000 items are good initial goals.

3. Prepare materials:

- At least 2 large cardboard boxes per donation site. Decorate the boxes for the holidays!
- Holiday attire for every member. Santa hats are great!
- Flyers to distribute around campus and in the community (included in this document)
- Handbills to give customers as they enter stores (included in this document)
- Prepare a social media campaign (ideas included in this document)

4. Set up a volunteer schedule:

Complete this early in November and inform volunteers how to sign up for roles. Clearly define these roles and communicate expectations to each volunteer. Allow volunteers 2-3 weeks to sign up and follow up with them on their responsibilities one week prior to the toy drive. You will need:

- Site leaders - to organize day-of-event activities
- Collection volunteers - 2 to 4 per location
- Drivers - 1 to 2 per location, depending on volume of toys collected
- Sorting coordinator - to lead the counting, sorting, and reporting of items collected

(Example of a volunteer schedule is included in this document)

Volunteer roles:

1. Event coordinator is responsible for:
 - a. Ensuring site leaders have successfully prepared each donation location
 - b. Organizing the volunteer schedule and recruiting volunteers
 - c. Creating the social media plan to utilize for the event
 - d. Coordinating with the partner organization and setting up a time for item delivery
 - e. Communicating with all site leaders during the event's duration
2. Site leaders are responsible for:
 - a. Location management and coordinating with the store manager
 - b. Coordinating with other site volunteers on car pooling, roles, collection boxes, signage
 - c. The primary liaison between site location and event coordinator

3. Collection volunteers are responsible for:
 - a. Staying at the collection location during the entire event
 - b. Interacting with customers and toy donors and receiving the items to be donated
4. Drivers are responsible for:
 - a. Transporting donated toys from store locations back to chapter house or sorting location
 - b. Loading and unloading toys promptly and returning to store location for new loads
 - c. Delivering all donated items to partner organization after sorting and counting is completed
5. Sorting coordinator is responsible for:
 - a. Directing all sorting and counting by category after collection (guidelines below)
 - b. Creating a brief report of how many items were donated on the day of the event

Expected behavior of all volunteers:

1. All volunteers will be prompt, on time, dressed appropriately, and presentable.
2. All volunteers will be energetic and ready to make a difference in the community.
3. All volunteers will adhere to the store's operating policies and procedures.
4. All volunteers will be respectful and polite to store patrons.
5. All volunteers will respect the directions given to them by the event coordinator.

Executing the toy drive:

1. Collection site checklist:

1. Arrive at each collection location at least one hour in advance.
2. All volunteers are present and in appropriate attire.
3. Speak with store manager to notify them you will begin donations. Exchange contact information.
4. Set up your collection boxes, post any appropriate signage, and prepare handbills for distribution.
 - a. If inside, do not block entrances or impede patrons.
 - b. If outside, keep donated items clean, dry, and undamaged.
5. Ensure drivers are ready to transport items to sorting location if there is overflow.

2. Item collection process:

1. Post a pre-event picture on social media.
2. Distribute handbill to patrons as they enter the store.
3. Explain **WHY** you're collecting and **WHO** it helps.
4. Inform patrons of when you will finish collection, allowing them time to shop.
5. Collect items for your benefitting organization.
6. When the event is over, transport all items to the sorting location, pack up your materials, and remove signage and flyers.
7. Notify store manager you are done before departing.

3. Sorting and counting items after the event:

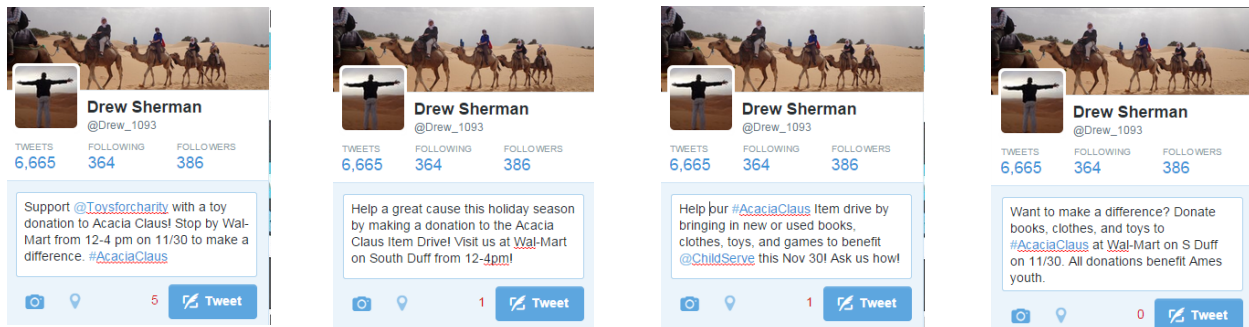
1. Bring all items, still unwrapped, back to the sorting location immediately following the event.
2. Count all items and sort them by category to make it easy for your benefitting organization to distribute donations
3. Use the following categories for the best results:
 - a. Clothes
 - b. Books
 - c. Sports items
 - d. Board games
 - e. Boys' toys
 - f. Girls' toys

Advertising and marketing:

1. Social media for all members:

1. Share information about event on social media in the days leading up to the item drive.
2. Post updates and pictures to Facebook, Twitter, etc. during Acacia Claus.
3. Mention and tag all partner organizations and locations using hashtags and websites.

Example Tweets:



These four posts are examples of the type of information you could send out to community members prior to, and on the day of the event. Many successful toy drives will post from an organization's Twitter or Facebook page while individual volunteers also make these posts.

- Create a schedule of posts for the event.
 - One original post per day from a central account for one month prior to the event
 - 3-5 additional posts per day from contributors and volunteers for two weeks prior
 - Continuously re-tweet, re-share, and reply to others' posts
- Include the dates, times, locations, benefitting organization, and how and what to donate. This is both informative and helpful for your audience.

2. Report to Acacia International Headquarters:

At the conclusion of the event, be sure to post a short summary and pictures from the event to your organization's website and social media accounts, and share it with your benefitting organization. Take note of ideas and suggestions for how to execute an even more successful Acacia Claus in the future, and pass along all notes and materials in a single three-ring binder (or similar) to the next year's event coordinator.

3. Report to Acacia International Headquarters:

At the conclusion of the event, be sure to submit a short summary and pictures to Acacia International Headquarters at communications@acacia.org to be recognized for your service efforts!



Acacia Claus

Annual Toy Drive

Date:

Time:

Place:

Benefitting:





Acacia Claus
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Benefitting:



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Benefitting: