



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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RE: Ben-El - Santa visits children's therapy group

Alicia Harter, case manager at Ben-El Child and Family Center has organized Toys for Tots in the Bellefontaine area for the last few years. With the help of her former Marine unit, Weapons Company 3-25 out of Akron, toys are distributed to local families on or around Christmas Eve day. Harter is a former Marine Corporal.

This year Santa made a personal appearance, surprising fifteen children attending a social skills group at the agency. The children (grades 2-5) are finishing a ten - week session learning how to get along with friends and peers. They were rewarded with a Christmas party and Santa who arrived with a gift for each child.

The spirit of Christmas is a community endeavor. Jason Able, who portrayed Santa, is a Marine with the Akron unit and has recently returned from Iraq. He resides in Bellefontaine. In addition, Bellefontaine resident Steve Climer, a pilot for United Airlines, donated the money for the party and gifts. Climer is the husband of Ben-El therapist Joy Wish.

A new social skills group will begin in January. Youth are referred by family, schools, case workers or other professionals. For information contact the Ben-El Child and Family Center at 937-599-2766.

**Pictured is the social skills youth group with Santa on December 19.**

