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## Resources

[Safety](#)
[Pressroom](#) (web)

[CEO Hotline](#)
[Metro Projects](#)
[Facts at a Glance](#)  
(web)

[Archives](#)
[Events Calendar](#)
[Research Center/  
Library](#)
[Metro Cafe](#) (pdf)

[Metro Classifieds](#)
[Retirement  
Round-up](#)

## Metro Info

[Strategic Plan](#) (pdf)

[Org Chart](#) (pdf)

[Policies](#)
[Training](#)
[Help Desk](#)
[Intranet Policy](#)

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Operator David Ojeda as Santa Claus arrived on a bright red bus with an elf (Operator Peter Freeman's son) to deliver presents.



### Division One Transportation Hosts Christmas Party for Para Los Ninos Students

By DAVE HERSHENSON

(Dec. 22, 2004) Division 1 Transportation employees played Santa Dec. 17 to a group of low -ncome children from Para Los Ninos, a nearby elementary school that the division has adopted and hosted at various events during the year.

Division 1 Operator Lisa Atilano coordinated the Christmas party with help from Rose Mumford, division managers, and fellow employees. Each Para Los Ninos student was asked to write a Christmas letter to Santa, including a list of toys they wished for. The letters were forwarded to a number of honorary Santas (bus operators) who, in turn, "adopted" a student and purchased one of the toys on the child's wish list.

Approximately 120 children visited Division 1 on the morning of Dec. 17.



The approximately 120 children were greeted by approximately 80 to 90 Metro Bus Operator Santas. The children were treated to a delicious holiday meal, prepared by staff, which included turkey, ham, macaroni and cheese, sweet potato pie, cakes, punch and other treats.

After singing a few songs, the children were called up to receive their gifts by Santa Claus. Operator David Ojeda played the role of Santa Claus, arriving on a bright red bus with an elf (Operator Peter Freeman's son) and visited the kids with handshakes, hugs and holiday greetings.

#### **'A great event'**

"It means a lot to the children," said Lisa Monatano, one of the head teachers from Para Los Ninos who helped coordinate the event. "These boys and girls come from low-income homes, so any gifts they receive are really appreciated. We hosted a really nice event for the kids on Halloween, and now we have a great event with Santa Claus, great food, generous gifts, and a really great group of people."

Atilano was heartened by the overwhelming support of the event by Division 1 operators. "We set this up with the teachers from the school, and then asked operators to participate by donating gifts to the children," said Atilano.

"Our employees have said they want to do more for the community, and we had a great response from our operators here. This event has brought a lot of joy to everyone to see these kids have such a good time. I hope we can do it again next year, and for many more years after that."

Division 1 Transportation Manager Sonja Owens shared Atilano's sentiments. "We feel it is important to give back to the communities we serve," she said. It is really gratifying to be able to hand out presents to kids that come from families who may not be able to provide these kinds of gifts. This event brought home the spirit of the Christmas season to everyone involved."

