



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Laurie Chartorynsky
The Toy Association
646.454.5590 / cell: 516.721.6596
lchartorynsky@toyassociation.org

HOLIDAYS COME EARLY FOR HUNDREDS OF CHICAGO-AREA KIDS IN NEED

Local toy company volunteers, The Toy Foundation, & Illinois DCFS bring toys to 200+ kids in foster care

Chicago, IL | July 17, 2019 – The holiday season came early for hundreds of Chicago-area children living in foster care, who received brand-new toys and games today at a fun-filled event hosted by [The Toy Foundation](#) (TTF), the philanthropic arm of the North American toy industry, in partnership with the [Illinois Department of Children and Family Services](#) (DCFS). “Play Your Part Chicago” brought together local toy industry volunteers to create memorable experiences with kids in need at Guaranteed Rate Field, home to the Chicago White Sox.

“Many foster kids are suffering from abuse, neglect, and other adversities – situations that no child should ever have to endure,” said Jean Butler, executive director of The Toy Foundation. “We want to help these children in any way we can. Giving them a few hours of unrestricted playtime, and watching their faces light up as they are gifted with toys and games, is truly a rewarding experience.”

Nearly two dozen local toy companies, including Learning Resources, PlayMonster, Radio Flyer, TOMY, and VTech Electronics North America, participated in the event. Companies donated playthings, sponsored activity stations, and/or sent company volunteers, who handed out toys and led activities for more than 300 children in attendance.

The event activities included riding Radio Flyer scooters and bicycles, coloring and decorating PlayMonster’s Fuzzikins, building wooden airplanes and other models with UGears, engaging in STEM and coding activities from Learning Resources, getting temporary tattoos with Intertek, and doing the VTech Leap Builders Stacking Challenge. The Chicago White Sox mascot, Southpaw, also made a very special guest appearance to greet the children. The event was capped off with a special toy distribution, where each child went home with an overstuffed bag of brand-new toys and games.

Volunteers also helped write heartfelt letters of comfort and fill additional gift bags with toys to be distributed to local foster children in the coming weeks. In all, nearly 7,000 toys were donated to TTF’s [Toy Bank](#) for this event by toy manufacturers, retailers, and distributors.

"We are extremely proud to partner with The Toy Foundation for this exciting event, brightening the lives of many children in need," said Marc D. Smith, acting director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. "It is important for children to have toys; we know that play helps to improve children's self-esteem, social skills, and problem solving. The toy giveaway is a memorable event for the children and we cannot thank the Foundation and the toy industry enough!"

Added Tiffany Lavery, public relations manager at VTech Electronics North America: "Play Your Part is one of our favorite events to participate in each year because it's 100 percent focused on providing kids in need with a fun day of play. Working with The Toy Foundation to give back to kids in the community is so important for our team – seeing their joy is the reason we make toys!"

Sponsors for the event included: ChiTAG, Educational Insights, Intertek, Learning Resources, Magformers, PlayMonster, Radio Flyer, VTech, UGears, Toy'n Around, and TOMY.

In addition to Chicago, Play Your Part events have been held in Los Angeles, Fort Lauderdale, FL, and Boston. The events are operated by TTF in partnership with children's charitable organizations that are the touchpoint to underserved kids in their local areas and exemplify the true generosity of the toy community.

About The Toy Foundation www.toyfoundation.org

The Toy Foundation (TTF) is a 501(c)3 children's charity whose mission is to provide joy and comfort to children in need through the experience of toys and play. TTF serves children who are coping with serious illness, enduring temporary home placements in the foster care system, suffering from abuse or neglect, experiencing separation from a deployed military parent, or dealing with devastating natural disasters. To date, TTF's signature program, The Toy Bank, has provided more than \$200 million in toys to over 25 million children in need around the globe, thanks to its generous toy donors.

About the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

Founded in 1964, DCFS is responsible for protecting children from abuse or neglect by responding to calls received on the Child Abuse Hotline, 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873). With the goal of keeping children safe, DCFS strengthens and supports families with a wide-range of services. When keeping a child safe means removing them from a home, DCFS makes every effort to reunite them with their family; when the best interest of the child makes this impossible, DCFS is committed to pursuing adoption by loving families to provide children with a safe and permanent home. DCFS is also responsible for licenses and monitors all Illinois child welfare agencies.

###