

# Public may pick up needy kids' letters to Santa, but finding postal branches may be a challenge

**[www.BeAnElf.org](http://www.BeAnElf.org) fills the need, and gives would-be volunteers a list of USPS letters to Santa branches**

Los Angeles, CA – Volunteers can "adopt" letters to Santa Claus from needy kids asking Santa for "a warm coat," "food or clothes," or "shoes for my older brother," and then mail their gifts directly to the family they chose. This month in 17 major cities, the US Postal Service is giving the public letters to Santa written by low income children.

The problem is that many of those wishing to volunteer can't find a list of participating post offices. Online searches, even at [www.USPS.com](http://www.USPS.com) and Google, do not readily result in the USPS' current 2013 directory. Because of this and the quality of Be An Elf's website, in 2012 the Today Show gave out the [www.BeAnElf.org](http://www.BeAnElf.org) url at the end of their story on the USPS letters to Santa (to verify this, see link below to the Today Show segment).

[www.BeAnElf.org](http://www.BeAnElf.org) is a much-needed resource letting the public know where they can volunteer for USPS Operation letters to Santa program. It offers an easy-to-find, current list of all participating USPS Operation Santa branches, along with the hours of operation, tips for volunteering and more.

Children's Santa letters may be picked up at a single postal branch in 17 cities this year: Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York City, Boston, Orlando, Philadelphia, Washington DC, Chicago, Houston, Cincinnati, Newark and 6 others. In 2011, there were 75 branches; in 2012, 25 branches offered the letters; and in 2013, only 17. Reasons include the Postal Service has been losing billions, and December is their busiest time of year. 2013 marks the 101st anniversary of the Operation Santa program, first started by the USPS in 1912.

[www.BeAnElf.org](http://www.BeAnElf.org) is the best online guide to Operation Santa. The website offers an easy-to-find list of this year's branches, tips for buying gifts for needy kids, such as backpacks and school supplies, and suggests a small gift for Moms, who the site notes

are "often single and living below the poverty line." Be An Elf recommends that volunteers share the work and the fun, and give parties to which their friends bring gifts, and wrap them together.

Some volunteers feel alone and sad over the holidays, and find comfort being part of this program. Others have families and bring their kids to teach them the meaning of Christmas.

Be An Elf's home page notes, "There's no middle man or charity. It's micro-philanthropy, direct from you to a child, when you volunteer in this way. You'll catch the true spirit of the holidays, and put smiles on the faces of needy kids on Christmas morning."

The non-profit group was founded in 2004 by Patrick Reynolds, a longtime volunteer for Operation Santa. "Elf Patrick" is available for interviews, and the best pre-interview would be to view his past TV interviews about Be An Elf. See the links below.

Alternatively, BeAnElf.org asks that reporters include a mention or link to the site, so the public can easily learn where their nearest participating Letters to Santa postal branch is.

Contact: Patrick Reynolds, aka "Elf Patrick"  
Cell (310) 880-1111  
[patrick2@BeAnElf.org](mailto:patrick2@BeAnElf.org)  
Los Angeles, CA

Two recent cable News interviews with "Elf Patrick", and The Today Show's story offering Be An Elf's website at the end:

[MSNBC News Segment](#) with Be An Elf spokesperson, December 4, 2011

[Fox News Channel Segment](#) with Be An Elf spokesperson, December 5, 2011

[NBC Today Show](#) mentions BeAnElf.org at end of segment, as a good way to find out where to volunteer, December 9, 2012

SOURCE: Be An Elf