Secret Snowflake Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How will mailing the gifts work?
A: NYC Service will send each business their letters along with the specific address where gifts should be mailed to. Although there is always a concern during the holidays for items online not being available or in-store only, we recognize that many people are not comfortable with shopping for gifts in person and welcome those to use online shipping as an alternative even if a gift may defer from the letter request. We only ask volunteers to do what they are most comfortable with. Mailing may start on November 1, 2020 and all gifts must be sent by December 8, 2020.

Q: Do employees have to mail gifts?
A: NYC Service can work with your business to have a model that works best for your business. However, if you request to have an in-person pick up or hybrid model please notify NYC Service ASAP.

Q: How will the city agencies know who my gift goes to?
A: Each package must include the youth’s specific letter code that will be provided to each volunteer. This code must be written on the package and included in the shipping address. If an individual shops through an online vendor and sends the gift directly, the letter code can be inputted in the comment section at check out and also as an additional mailing address line. Examples will be included in instructions.

Q: Are there any spending parameters?
A: There is no dollar amount maximum or minimum, but we ask that volunteers only spend what they are comfortable with while also being mindful of the vulnerability of the population that is being served.

Q: In year's past, our company has received support with letter matching from NYC Service. Is that still an option for our company?
A: Ideally, we would like companies to match letters internally, if possible. However, if support is needed that can be arranged with NYC Service. Please be mindful that if support is needed for letter matching that volunteer sign-up forms would need to be sent to NYC Service by October 9, 2020.

Q: If we run out of letters can we request more?
A: You may request more letters but there is no guarantee that we will be able to secure additional letters. If we are able to do so, there may be a 1-2-week turnaround time.

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Q: Some of my employees missed the sign-up deadline so their names and letter requests were not included in the sign-up list we sent you. Can they still sign-up?
A: We may be able to accommodate them but there is no guarantee that we will be able to secure additional letters. If we are able to do so, there may be a 1-2-week turnaround time.

Q: My company is interested in donating but does not have the capacity to answer letters. Can we still participate?
A: Absolutely! All in-kind donations are welcomed whether big or small. Last year we received over 2,000 in-kind donations which enabled Secret Snowflake to reach a larger number of children in NYC.

Q: Do the gifts need to be wrapped?
A: Although we heavily encourage volunteers to wrap gifts if they can, this year due to the pandemic, we recognize some may not have the capacity to wrap gifts. Although, many online vendors have an option to wrap packages and we will leave it to the discretion of the individual to wrap gifts this year if purchasing through an online vendor.

Q: Can our employees write a little holiday note/card to the child they are buying the present for?
A: YES! We encourage it.

Q: Would it be possible to arrange for our employees to distribute the gifts to the children in-person and host a holiday party for them at the shelter?
A: Unfortunately, this year due to COVID-19 we are restricting all in-person Secret Snowflake events. Thus, we will not be able to host any holiday parties or in-person gift distribution this year.