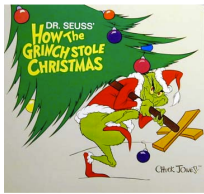


The Grinch That Stole Christmas: Toys Stolen from St. Joseph's

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EXTRA EXTRA!



Thousands of Christmas toys stolen from St. Joseph's. Toys were intended for pediatric patients with special medical needs.

Thousands of toys, valued at approximately \$20,000, were recently stolen from the Children's Rehabilitative Services (CRS) clinic at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center. Many of the burglarized toys were intended to be Christmas gifts for children with chronic and disabling medical conditions.

Hospital staff members say they are hoping that generous members of the community will help restock the toys in time for Santa's visit in mid-December.

CRS offers diagnosis, treatment and management of complicated medical disorders, and has become a second home to many of its patients and their families. Most of the 12,500 patients, ranging in age from birth to 21 years, come from low-income families.

In October, 90 percent of all the CRS toys vanished from a large, locked storage unit. In addition to the stolen toys, two large Wii systems, a popcorn machine used for events, and even the Santa Claus and Easter Bunny costumes were snatched.

"Every year, Santa visits CRS to provide each patient with a toy," says Lori Takeuchi, child life coordinator at St. Joseph's CRS clinic. "Many of our families find it difficult to visit with Santa out in the community due to respiratory viruses, cost and long lines, so CRS provides a safe and healthy environment for them to spend time with Santa. And now, because of a real-life Grinch, we are worried that there may not be enough gifts for all of our patients to receive from Santa at St. Joseph's CRS this year."

The children at St. Joseph's CRS clinic are in need of toys for all ages, in both English and Spanish languages. All donations are greatly appreciated. Members of the public wishing to donate toys or learn more about the donation guidelines for St. Joseph's children with special needs should call Ani Gurlekian at the St. Joseph's Foundation at 602-406-3041.