



Host a Toy Drive to celebrate **POCKET BEAR**

by Katherine Applegate, illustrated by Charles Santoso

*“Comforting is
what we toys do.
And it’s the best job
on the planet.”*

In the spirit of *Dasha’s Second Chances Home for the Tossed and Treasured*, your organization can sponsor a Toy Collection Drive to benefit children in your community.

1. Select a recipient agency to distribute the toys. Some ideas:

- Refugee support organizations
- Children’s hospitals and clinics
- Police, fire, and emergency medical service providers
- Child protective services, foster care agencies, or family and juvenile courts
- Food pantries or family shelters
- Military family support organizations
- Public libraries, local schools, or childcare centers
- Red Cross or other emergency support organizations
- Loved Before US donations

2. Determine if the organization can accept gently used toys or if they require new toys.

If collecting used toys, find out whether the toys need to be cleaned before donating. If yes, make a plan to prepare the toys for donation or consider implementing Dasha’s cleaning strategy. Partner with a school or restaurant with a large walk-in freezer for the Deep Freeze phase of cleaning. Enlist some volunteers, kiddie pools, dish soap, and lots of towels for the Spa Day phase. Rig up some clothesline and drying racks to ensure toys dry completely. For more ideas, reference the Do’s and Don’ts of Toy Donation: <http://bit.ly/45GIXep>.

3. Publicize your toy collection.

- Partner with local businesses, civic groups, and media to recruit volunteers and advertise your drive.
- Develop a flyer and social media graphics to circulate throughout your community.
- A PNG image including the book cover and a quote is included with this guide.

4. Combine your drive with another community event to increase participation.

- Schools-based events: back-to-school night, fall carnival, chorus or band concert, school play, end-of-year celebration
- Bookstore-related events: Independent Bookstore Day (last Saturday in April), beginning of the holiday shopping season, kickoff to summer reading
- Library-related events: kickoff to summer reading, National Library Card Sign-up Month (September)
- Other community events like local parades, festivals, or road races

5. Make a plan for containing and transporting your collection.

Put out a call for large boxes and have volunteers decorate them. Enlist community members with trucks or vans for transporting.

6. Include biographies of the toys or attach cards for the children receiving the toy to write their own.

A printable two-sided card is included with this guide. You can hole punch the corner and attach it with blue yarn like Pocket Bear’s scarf. Some young people might need a little coaxing on writing the biographies. Suggest information to include, such as favorite food, favorite bedtime story, first word, etc.

7. Publicize your success.

Use social media and local media to celebrate your successful drive and set the stage for future drives.

