



# ***El Monte NEWS***

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **20 December 2008: 26<sup>th</sup> Anniversary *Christmas Baskets for the Needy***

El Monte, Calif. - On December 20, 2008, the City of El Monte Police Department, along with the El Monte City Council and civic-minded community volunteers, will once again be putting together Christmas food and gift baskets for needy residents of El Monte.

The El Monte Police Department will be hosting the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Basket Program on Saturday, December 20, 2008. It is estimated that 250 volunteers will be working at the event this year to put food baskets together for over 800 needy families. Approximately 4000 to 4500 toys will also be given to children of families who would otherwise not receive a Christmas gift.

Officer Larry Fry has been in charge of the program for the past several years and said, "This year, more than ever, we are grateful to those that support this program in difficult economic times so that families in need can enjoy the spirit of Christmas". He went on to add, "No one knows better than the police as to who can use some help over the Christmas season. We are glad we can make a difference in someone's life".

Volunteers will begin gathering at 7:30 a.m. with work starting at approximately at 8:00 a.m. Shortly after food baskets are assembled distribution will begin. The event will take place in the municipal parking lot located southeast of the intersection of Lexington and Valley Mall.

The gift-basket program began with the Dickies clothing company in 1983, when employees, working with Police Officer Mark Sullivan (now retired Captain) and other members of the El Monte Police Department, teamed up to provide Christmas meals to 30 families in El Monte. Since then, each year the number of participants has risen. Now there are over 800 families on the receiving end of the program, with over 250 volunteers packing baskets with food and toys and drivers delivering them right to the recipients' door. The whole project begins at 7:30 a.m., and is completed by 10:30a.m. with military-like precision.

Basket assembly begins in the City parking lot behind 3540 Lexington, El Monte (Thomas Guide page 597 C-7) with food and toy donations from large national business who have been participating for years in the program. Members of the Press are invited to photograph preparation and delivery of gift baskets. Contact Detective Ralph Batres for more information at (626) 705-1981.

*El Monte, a city incorporated in 1912 and home to more than 125,000 residents, is a full-service city located in the heart of the San Gabriel Valley. It is freeway-close to all of Los Angeles, bisected by Interstate 10 and abutting Interstate 605. El Monte is home to a mega auto mall and boasts the largest single car dealership in the world, Longo Toyota.*

*El Monte can also be visited on the web at [www.ElMonteCA.gov](http://www.ElMonteCA.gov) ###*