

TOWN OF VERNON

Office of the Mayor

14 Park Place • Vernon, CT 06066

Tel: (860) 870-3600 • Fax: (860) 870-3580

www.Vernon-CT.gov



Daniel A. Champagne
Mayor

Michael J. Purcaro
Town Administrator

Dawn R. Maselek
Assistant Town Administrator

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Press Contact:

David Owens, Communications Specialist

Desk (860) 870-3574

Cell (860) 494-5973

Santa's Visit to Vernon's Santa House Wraps Up this Weekend – All Are Welcome

Santa House is open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday and Sunday

(VERNON, Connecticut) – With Christmas less than two weeks away, Santa and Mrs. Claus' time at the Santa House in Central Park in Vernon is drawing to a close. Santa will be at his house from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday and Sunday to hear Christmas wishes from children.

Then he and Mrs. Claus will return to the North Pole to oversee final preparations for his Christmas Eve journey around the world.

"Santa told me how much he has enjoyed visiting Vernon and speaking with children about their holiday wishes," Mayor Dan Champagne said. "This is an incredibly busy time of year for Santa, but he'll be here this Saturday and Sunday to give children one more chance to visit with him. Come on out."

Santa House is in Central Park in front of Vernon Town Hall. All children are welcome.

This is the seventh consecutive year Santa and Mrs. Claus have visited their house in Vernon, although the Santa House tradition goes back decades. There was a Santa House in the 1960s, and then another in the 1970s built by wood shop students at Rockville High School.

Both Santa houses were popular with local children. At some point Santa's annual visits to the Santa House ended.

The memories, however, lived on. Seven years ago, long-time Vernon resident and town council member Mike Wendus and a team of volunteers revived the tradition. They raised money and a new magnificent Santa House was built for Santa and Mrs. Claus' annual visits.

The merry couple arrives in Vernon each year during Winterfest, riding into town during the fire truck parade with Mayor Champagne and taking up residence in Santa House to meet with children.

“I remember back in the 1970s how excited children would get when they came to visit the Santa House,” Wendus said. “We wanted to recreate that magic for children today. And so far, the kids and their families love it.”

Pete Desmond, a Santa House volunteer, said people who remember the old Santa Houses now bring their children and grandchildren to visit Santa and are delighted by the new Santa House.

“They light up as much as the kids do,” Desmond said. “I don’t think they expect to see such a beautiful house.”

Dennis Gessay and his son Brett Gessay worked on the house and received help from many others, said Darcy Gessay-Desmond, Dennis’ daughter and another Santa House volunteer.

“This new Santa House is not only beautiful, but well-built,” Town Administrator Michael Purcaro said. “We’re looking forward to putting smiles on the faces of children from throughout our region for years to come. All are welcome at Vernon’s Santa House.”

About the Town of Vernon

The Town of Vernon is a celebrated place to live, work and visit. From its beautiful parks and lakes, to its vast trails and historic homes and buildings, Vernon is a resilient and thriving community that promotes the health and wellbeing of its residents and values the natural environment. With a resident population of approximately 30,000 and occupying 18.03 square miles, Vernon combines a balanced appreciation of history, and a strong economic base for growth, both residential and commercial. Located 15 minutes east of the Connecticut capital of Hartford, and 25 miles from the City of Springfield, Massachusetts, the Town of Vernon is strategically located in “New England's Knowledge Corridor” with close proximity to some of the top colleges and universities in the country.

Designated a certified Sustainable Community, the Town of Vernon offers a wide range of benefits and services to its residents. The Town of Vernon is a full-service municipality that practices a management philosophy of continuous quality improvement. To learn more about the Town of Vernon, please call (860) 870- 3670 or visit www.vernon-ct.gov.

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