

Get ready for Santa's big visit ^{Intell}

^{Belleville - N}
Belleville's Santa and Mrs. Claus are all set to hand out presents Christmas Eve to more than 1,000 youngsters.

And helping them will be everyone from clowns, Smurfs, bears, angels, Keystone cops, snowmen, shepherds and yes, even Scrooge.

Bruce and Marjorie Nickle are holding their traditional Christmas Eve celebration at their 45 Marsh Dr. home.

How popular is it?

Last year, children started lining up in the neighborhood as early as 5

p.m. for their chance to visit with the jolly couple at 7 p.m. For the next 90 minutes, more than 1,200 children walked away with gifts from the Nickles.

"This is the highlight of the year for us," Bruce said Thursday. "A person has to be here to understand the feeling. You just have to love the look on the kids faces."

The Nickles will begin visiting with youngsters from inside their garage at 7 p.m. The visits will end around 8:30 p.m.

The couple will hand out a variety of presents to children,

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everything from candy canes, coloring books and small teddy bears to Christie cookie men, lapel pins and even New Year's Eve noisemakers.

The presents are all courtesy of donations to the Nickles' Christmas display.

Starting at 5:30 p.m., the Nickles will have some 80 volunteers dressed as various characters who will entertain the waiting youngsters.

"These are people who used to live in Belleville and keep coming back year after year to help us out Christmas Eve," Nickle said.

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