Pre-Christmas flight

Santa waves as he arrives Sunday at Smith Reynolds Airport in Winston-Salem.

Santa trades reindeer for private plane as fly-in becomes annual tradition

BY MELISSA HALL
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Santa Claus took time out of his busy Christmas schedule to fly into Smith Reynolds Airport Sunday afternoon. Jayla Williams, 9, excitedly waited for Santa just outside the terminal.

“I want a tablet, something crafty and Legos,” she answered when asked what she wanted the jolly old elf to bring her.

About 125 children and 100 adults came out despite the rain to welcome Santa.

In the terminal, while they waited, the children — and some adults — played with balsa wood airplanes and enjoyed hot chocolate and cookies. Some people would occasionally go outside to see if there was any sign of the plane.

Around 2 p.m. Santa arrived aboard North Pole 1, a Beechcraft Bonanza airplane, piloted by Jonathan Miller, the man in red's...
Santa
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personal pilot.
"I was making the sugar
cake run. I went to the bak-
ery at Old Salem to get Mrs. 
Claus’ sugar cake," Santa
said.

After Santa and the chil-
dren recited the
names of the rein-
deer, he
told the
story of
how Don-
ner and
Blitzen
got their
names. Originally, the
names were Donder and
Blixem, the Dutch words for
thunder and lightning. Over
time, their names have be-
come Donner and Blitzen.

Santa told the children
that he made Mrs. Claus a
promise this year.
"I promised her I
wouldn’t ask for a lot of
cookies. So this year leave
only one cookie." (He said
his favorite cookie was
Oreos.)

To alleviate any fear from
children living in a home
without a chimney, he ex-
plained how he gets into
those houses.
"Years ago, the elves
made magic keys." He
showed them the key ring.
"I tap a key on a lock
three times and the door
opens."

Santa talked with all the
children (and a few adults)
who wanted to see him and
got lots of requests.

Ashlyn Josey, 8, and her
brother, Kenan Josey, 10,
talked with Santa about
what they wanted to find under the tree next
weekend.
"I asked for a kayak," 
Kenan said.

Nine-year-old Jayla Williams smiles as Santa arrives in an airplane at Smith Reynolds Airport on Sunday.

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year. We wanted to have
something fun and free for
the community," he said.
"It’s always on the Sunday
before Christmas."

Earlier this season,
Santa stopped by the pre-
school at Messiah Mor-
avian Church and the
students had something
for him.
"I was going to the long-
term care facility at the VA
and the kids had brought
gifts in for the residents.
It’s good to see the young
remember and revere the
older ones and make sure
they’re remembered a
Christmas," Santa said.

As Santa got ready to
board the plane for the tri-
back, he was heard to say
"It’s good to fly in some
thing with an enclosed
cockpit."

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