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## Santa makes home visits ahead of holiday

By Vera Kochan



Santa Claus stops by the Hacienda de las Flores Photo Vera Kochan

It is a rare occasion indeed when one gets a glimpse of Santa Claus in the middle of his rounds. Thanks to Moraga's Department of Parks and Recreation, Santa made a few early home visits Dec. 16-20 to surprise some children in the town.

With a smile on his rosy-cheeked face and a "Ho-Ho-Ho" ever present in his conversation, the jolly bearded gift-giver in his stylish red outfit granted a quick interview before heading out from the Hacienda de las Flores.

"Most of the children are receptive to my visit," Santa stated. "Although, one or two of the younger ones start to cry. If one starts to cry, the rest start to cry. They're not really certain of who this person is in the red suit. Ho-ho-ho! Some of the older children have cried, too!"

Santa mused, "When I ask them what they'd like for Christmas about 25% really don't know what they want.

They usually ask me for one thing. The bolder ones produce their list and start to read from it. Ho-ho-ho!" He added, "So many of them just want Mommy and Daddy to be happy and healthy. They ask for me to help relatives that are sick. A few have asked for their loved ones in the military to be safe. Their sincerity is very touching."

With a smile Santa said, "The children are quick to offer me hot chocolate and cookies. Some would like to give carrots and grass for my reindeer. Ho-ho-ho!"

Recalling some of the most asked questions Santa responded, "They always ask me where I parked my sleigh and if I would give them a ride to the North Pole. They want to know if I keep the reindeer in special places. Besides asking how many elves I employ, they want to know what Mrs. Claus is doing.

"The most popular question asked is how old am I," Santa added with a chuckle.

Before leaving each home Santa gives everyone a special candy cane. As he rides off into the night his parting wish can be heard like a distant whisper on the wind, "Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"

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