**The Parenting Center**

**School District of South Orange and Maplewood, New Jersey**

**525 Academy Street, Maplewood, NJ 07040**

973-762-5600, X1850

**Karen Weiland, LCSW, Director Marilu Gregory, LCSW, Chairperson**

October 23, 2014

Dear Friend,

The SOMSD Parenting Center Toy Drive provides holiday gifts for the children of the neediest families in our school district. The children are identified under federal guidelines as living in poverty and are eligible for free or reduced price lunch in the schools. Last year, the toy drive benefitted 155 such families and nearly 500 children.  All donations are used to purchase gifts for children and none of the money donated is taken for administrative costs.

This toy drive is a volunteer effort and run by members of our community.  The donated gifts are given to parents who, in turn, provide them to their children. The Parenting Center volunteers purchase books & gifts for children from infancy through age 17. The community gathers together at the school district building in early to mid-December and organizes the gifts to give to the identified families. We make every attempt to individualize the gifts to the needs of the families. It is a joyous and heartwarming occasion as we know that the children who receive these gifts will be very surprised and grateful at holiday time.

We hope that you will consider making a tax-deductible donation to the toy drive this year and we will shop for the items needed for the families we serve.  Your support will enable our community to bring joy to these children and their families.  If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at 973-762-5600, ext. 1850 or to Lorraine at Lorrainecaputo3@gmail.com.  Make all checks payable to The SOMSD Parenting Center.

Sincerely,

Karen Weiland, LCSW

Director, Parenting Center

Lorraine Caputo, LCSW & Abby Cotler

Co-Chairs, Annual Toy Drive