

[Community Corner](#)

American Christmas 'Christmas Experience' Raised \$61K For Nonprofits

The Mount Vernon Boys & Girls Club, the Northeast STEM Starter Academy & the Youth Community Outreach Program got a late Christmas present.



Jeff Edwards, Patch Staff P

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Gerald Dennis of Northeast STEM Starter Academy of Mt. Vernon, Melvin Campos of The Mount Vernon Boys & Girls Club, Dan Casterella of American Christmas, Mt. Vernon Mayor Shawyn Patterson-Howard, and Henry Wilson of YCOP of Mt. Vernon.
(Risa B. Hoag)

MOUNT VERNON, NY — It is truly better to give than to receive and one Mount Vernon business knows that better than most.

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American Christmas, located at 30 Warren Place in Mount Vernon, has been creating some of the world's most famous holiday displays for over 50 years, including at Rockefeller Center, Radio City Music Hall, Macy's, Cartier, Saks, Harry Winston, Ralph Lauren and J. Crew. The company operates in 30 states much to the delight of holiday revelers across the U.S.

This past holiday season, the company once again opened its doors to the public, giving ticketholders a peek at the behind-the-scenes work that goes into the magical Christmas displays the company is known for. In addition to warehouse admission, visitors were able to tour the company's showroom, which was transformed into Santa's Workshop, ideal for photo-taking under 100,000 twinkling lights and included many fun animatronics and surprises. The public was also able to shop on-site at both the outlet store, which offered hundreds of vintage displays of all shapes and sizes, as well as at the "Christmas in America" retail shop, filled with unique ornaments and decorations.

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"We are so proud to support these three local and important nonprofit organizations that benefit kids," American Christmas CEO Dan Casterella said. "We are happy to give back to the community that supports us all year long."

The popular event attracted over 7,500 visitors from over 20 states. All proceeds from the Christmas tradition benefitted The Mount Vernon Boys & Girls Club, the Northeast STEM Starter Academy of Mt. Vernon, and the Youth Community Outreach Program of Mount Vernon. An overwhelming success, the Christmas Experience was able to donate \$61,000 total this year to the three organizations.

"This is year two that American Christmas has demonstrated its commitment to social responsibility by donating the proceeds from its 2023 Holiday Lane interactive experience to Youth-Community Outreach Program (Y-Cop), Northeast STEAM Starter Academy (NSSA) and the Mount Vernon Boys & Girls Club," said Mount Vernon Mayor Shawyn Patterson-Howard. "You can't fake generosity, and when businesses such as American Christmas consistently show up it's the young people and the Mount Vernon community at large that benefits."

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Unlike the Christmas gifts found under the tree in December, these gifts will keep giving.

"The kindness, generosity, and commitment reflected in the willingness of Dan and American Christmas to stand with and for our children will empower them to achieve better life and educational outcomes," Gerald Dennis, Founder, Executive Director, Northeast STEM Starter Academy of Mt. Vernon, said. "Having given for a consecutive second year further deepens a commitment that will make an immeasurable difference for the many students who will benefit through their participation in our STEM educational programs. The NSSA at Mt. Vernon thanks Dan and his team for their caring leadership."

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Likewise, the hefty donation will allow programs like the Youth Community Outreach Program to pay it forward.

"Y-COP is grateful to American Christmas for supporting our programs for a second consecutive year! This generous donation allows Y-COP the opportunity to better serve the youth and meet the needs of the community," Henry Wilson, Executive Director of YCOP of Mt. Vernon, stated. "Also, the Y-COP youth were very excited to tour the American Christmas showcase during the holiday season."

Thanks to the American Christmas "Christmas Experience," more than just those who delighted at the behind-the-scenes tour are convinced that there very much is such a thing as Santa Claus.

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"For the second year Boys & Girls Club of Mount Vernon will benefit from a powerful collaboration between Government, For Profit, and Not for Profit sectors. The youth of Mount Vernon are the ultimate beneficiaries when collaboration works," Melvin Campos, CEO of The Mount Vernon Boys & Girls Club, said.

More information about American Christmas can be found [here](#).
