

The Secret is Sharing



Santa's Secret Service

www.santasecretservice.com

#8 1235 64th Ave. S.E. | Calgary, AB T2H 2J7 | Telephone: (403) 257-8339 | Fax: (403) 255-7117

Spring 2009

Santa's conspiracy of love

One might think that author Hamilton Wright Mabie was thinking of Santa's Secret Service when he wrote: "Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love!" How else would we be able to anonymously provide 2248 personalized gifts to over one hundred care provider facilities, but with a well-planned conspiracy?

The scheming begins in September...

- Care providers nominate isolated seniors, providing information and suggestions of what they would want and need
- Secret Santas from more than seventy corporate groups and close to two-hundred individuals sign-up to purchase a gift for their special senior
- Secret elves work year-round to make cards, blankets and other crafts to help bring more Christmas cheer
- Santa's elves work tirelessly to sort and pack the gifts, ensuring that they are sent to the appropriate location in time for the big day
- Caring businesses like Norampac and West Direct Express donate their resources to make the safe packaging and delivery of the precious gifts possible

As you can see, hundreds of people anonymously work together to ensure that isolated seniors in Calgary and surrounding communities are not forgotten during the Christmas season. Amid news of a global economic recession, our volunteers and donors have continued to give selflessly and generously, in the true spirit of St. Nicholas himself.

After twenty-four years, the plans to implement this conspiracy have changed in response to the growing need, but one thing remains the same: it is driven by our love and compassion for the seniors in our community who are alone. Thank you for being an important part of this conspiracy of love!

Cindy Chambers, President

Rick Black, Vice President

Stella Parisien, Treasurer

Lorine Stevens, Secretary

Susan Greenaway, Director

Joan Keating, Director

Kelly Laverty, Director

Mia Heidebrecht, Director

Kari Garlock, Director

In this issue:

Santa's conspiracy of love

Santa's supporters are steadfast in their dedication

Cheer All Year: an exciting major initiative for Santa's Secret Service

Birthday gift donations

We've moved!

Every generous moment heals the heart

Our board is blooming

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Santa's Secret Service



Sandbox Photography and Design Inc.

Santa's supporters are steadfast in their dedication

With unabashed enthusiasm, our supporters converge in the months leading up to Christmas, year after year. We appreciate that dedicated supporters are a rare breed, and this is why we honour our relationships with volunteers and donors that have developed over the years, as it is these individuals, groups and businesses who make "the secret is sharing" possible:

- Thousands of anonymous Secret Santas, corporate coordinators, volunteers and donors
- Sufa Canada Ltd.
- West Direct Express Ltd.
- Norampac Inc.
- Rona Home & Garden
- Preceptory #33 Ladies Auxilliary
- Southcentre Mall
- Gibson Energy Ltd.
- Fraternal Order of Eagles
- Elsie and Friends
- Helping Hands

We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to the staff at **Calgary Police Service** and **Karen Sihvonen** who made it possible to have four secure and convenient gift drop-off locations throughout the city. Many Secret Santas have expressed their tremendous gratitude to the Calgary Police Service for making this possible.

Birthday gift donations

Thanks to all of the Secret Santas who have already donated a gift or funds to ensure that their senior will receive a gift for their birthday this year. Now that the hectic holiday season has passed, many Secret Santas have been inquiring about how they can provide a gift for their senior. There are two options...

- 1.** Use the information provided to you at Christmas to purchase a second gift for your senior (no additional information will be given). Package the gift in the same manner as the Christmas gifts (place in gift bag with tissue, label with senior's name and ID codes, attach content list, include card signed "from Santa's Birthday Elf"). Contact Program Coordinator at **403.257.8339** or **coordinator@santassecretservice.com** to arrange for gift drop-off at Santa's office (note our new location) at least two months prior to your senior's birth month.
- 2.** Forward a monetary donation of \$20 per gift (through our website's link to Canada Helps) or send a cheque to our office (note our new location) to ensure that volunteers will have the resources to make a toiletry or treat bag for your senior.

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Cheer All Year: an exciting major initiative for Santa's Secret Service

In 2006, care providers reported that birthdays are another lonely time for seniors without family and friends. Since then, Santa's Secret Service Board, volunteers and staff have worked together to provide a birthday gift to approximately 600 of the over 2200 seniors who have been identified as isolated.

Three years later, we have devised a plan to ensure that all of these seniors will receive warm wishes with a card and a gift on both Christmas and their birthday. In addition to the Secret

Santas who were able to provide two gifts for their senior, accounting firm **Meyers Norris Penny (MNP)** has committed both funds and volunteer resources to make Cheer All Year possible.

"Isolation isn't an issue just at Christmas. Because birthdays can be an equally lonely time, we wanted to reach out to the seniors in our communities year round. The partnership with MNP is making this possible, and enabling us to deliver Cheer All Year sooner than we would have otherwise, and to a larger number of seniors. Additionally, the resources, enthusiasm and talent that MNP bring to the table are helping us to grow and streamline as an organization, and that level of engagement is very exciting, as it not only includes traditional volunteer efforts, but extends into the boardroom as well.", says Cindy Chambers, President of Santa's Secret Service Board of Directors.

The official public launch of Cheer All Year by Santa's Secret Service is currently being planned although the specific date has not been determined. We hope that all of our supporters will join us for this celebration. Please watch for your invitation and save the date!



Calling all casino volunteers

We are pleased to report that Santa's Secret Service has been granted another fundraising casino! In order to benefit from this fantastic opportunity, we need the support of our volunteers once again. Here are the details...

- when:** Tuesday, June 30th and Wednesday, July 1st, 2009
- where:** Casino Calgary, 1420 Meridian Road NE (now smoke free!)
- what:** volunteers are needed for all positions, all shifts
- who:** please call **Stella** at **403.240.2853** or email **vegas1@telus.net** for more information

We hope you can join us for this fun and lucrative fundraising opportunity!

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If you haven't had a chance to already, please be sure to take a few moments to read the thank you cards and letters received from senior recipients and their care providers this Christmas. You can find them online at www.santasecretservice.com (click on Newsletters, then "Healing Hearts").

Our board is blooming

Mia Heidebrecht joined Santa's Board of Directors in January, following the official announcement that her employer Meyers Norris Penny (MNP) would be the title sponsor for Cheer All Year. Having a big heart for seniors and being a senior manager with her company, Mia is the perfect person to assume the role of MNP Liaison. In addition to an impressive diversity of professional experience and knowledge as a Chartered Accountant, Mia has worked with and volunteered for numerous non-profit organizations. She brings a fresh perspective and infectious enthusiasm to our Board and will be a vital contributor to the growth and sustainability of Cheer All Year by Santa's Secret Service. Welcome, Mia!

Kari Garlock has worked with Santa's Secret Service for many years, nominating isolated seniors as a care provider with Metropolitan Calgary Foundation Housing for Seniors. Following the Christmas 2008 season, having witnessed the reactions of the recipients who reside at the lodge she manages, Kari sent the following email: "I am so touched by the kindness and caring of people in Calgary, I would like to volunteer my services to your organization. Let me know if there is anything that I could do to contribute to such a wonderful service." As we have been looking for care provider representation on our Board of Directors, Kari is a wonderful addition and will bring an important perspective to the future of Santa's Secret Service. Welcome, Kari!

We've moved!

For the past three seasons, Santa's Secret Service has been extremely fortunate to share a roof with **Sufa Canada Ltd.**, whose staff and management have been graciously accommodating, always taking the chaotic Christmas season in stride. As the lease on their NE property will expire in 2009, Sufa has gone above and beyond once again, finding a new location with space for Santa's operations!

As of March 23rd, our office is located at #8, 1235 - 64th Avenue SE. Our phone, fax and email will remain the same. Please feel free to stop by for a visit sometime!