

# Cherry Hills Residents Give Back in the Holiday Season!



## SANTA'S ELVES

Several Cherry Hills Residents came together to put smiles on children's' faces at the Annual Santa's Elves Event, held on Saturday, December 9, 2016! This one-of-a-kind philanthropy fosters kids GIVING to kids! These Cherry Hills residents had the opportunity to "adopt" and shop for holiday gifts to present to underprivileged families in the Denver Metro area.

Santa's Elves/KidsGiving365 began in 2010 when three moms joined forces to offer their children a platform for giving. The Founders are, Deborah Sherman, Jennifer Ramirez & Stella Castro.

They have gone from helping 75 kids back in 2010 to helping over 2,575 kids by 2016!

Their mission is to nurture the **Next Generation of Givers**. This non-profit creates opportunities for kids to be involved with giving and community service, all year-round. Kids actually meet and help those in need. This personal interaction is priceless.

"Santa's Elves shows my son another side of life; that it can be hard and a struggle. But it also teaches him that we're not powerless. We can lend a hand, we can make a difference. Even though he's just ten, he's learning his actions matter," said Deborah Sherman, co-founder. "When he helps others, I see real joy and pride on his face."

KidsGiving365 hosts various events throughout the year. These wonderful opportunities include: Santa's Elves/Adopt a Family for the Holidays, Winter Coat Drives & School Supply Drives!

The children that are served through this charity live in poverty. They are a part of Denver Housing Authority's Housing Projects, located in neglected neighborhoods. The average annual income is \$12,000 a year.

KidsGiving365 was also pivotal in paying off the entire Denver Public School lunch debt for 3,264 children in these neighborhoods. The debt had accumulated to \$17,000.00! Thanks to KidsGiving365, the entire debt was paid off and they were able to permanently change district policy. Now, EVERY child will receive a hot lunch, even if parents are unable to pay.



Residents, Lisa Butterly, Abby Chavez, Hayden Collins, Rosalina Diecidue, Sandi Johnson, Becky Mackintosh, Jen Sax, Laura Shipman, Trish Silverman, and Liz Temple were honored and thrilled to meet the kids in need and present them with holiday gifts!

This is definitely one of those philanthropic organizations where the entire family can get involved. The experience is magical & unforgettable for all the kids who are GIVING the gifts AND for those who are RECEIVING!

"My kids look forward to Santa's Elves each year. We hold it near and dear to our hearts. It's so gratifying to know that you are brightening up the life of a child ... the experience is truly magical." - Rosalina Diecidue

To learn more about Santa's Elves/KidsGiving365 or to make a tax-deductible donation, please visit: [kidsgiving365.org](http://kidsgiving365.org)



## THE VILLAGE TOY DRIVE

Photos by KBenfield Photography

The 4th Annual The Village Toy Drive was another huge success, with over 1000 new toys collected. The drive is organized by First American State Bank in partnership with *Cherry Hills Village Living* magazine. All toys are donated to Volunteers of America, who need around 6000 toys each holiday season to give to underprivileged families in Denver. For some of those families, this may be the only toy they receive.

Many of the toys came from the families at West Middle School, but they were also collected by First American State Bank, Vistar Performance Food Group, Gymboree Play & Music, the Cherry Hills Police Department and A Line Boutique, plus, of course, our local residents. The wrapping party included The Bridge Girls Gone Wild, who wrapped a huge number of presents and students from West Middle School, who loaded up the vans. We are very grateful to Yayas, Backcountry Delicatessen, Colonna's Pizza & Pasta and Firehouse Subs for donating food for the busy volunteer wrappers!

In addition, residents Tim and Melanie Schmieding hosted their 2nd annual holiday party toy drive at their new home in Old Cherry Hills on December 16th. Attended by over 70 guests, more than 75 toys were donated and a great time was had by all. Their son Jack has embraced this tradition, wanting to know before the party when he was going to get



Students from West Middle School



The Bridge Girls Gone Wild



Melanie and Tim Schmieding



Guests at the Schmieding's 2nd annual holiday party toy drive

to shop for the toys for other kids. "It was inspiring to see a tree with hover boards, skateboards, Barbies, and other toys and electronics. It feels good to think you made Christmas a little more special for some less fortunate families," said Tim. Melanie added, "The generosity of our friends never ceases to amaze me. I want to start earlier next year and do more."

Thank you to everyone that donated toys and got involved in The Village Toy Drive this year!