



NORTHEAST  
**Community Center**  
Friends of the Center Newsletter

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## Volunteers Bring Christmas to Children

Every year the Northeast Community Center and C.O.P.S. Northeast bring a unique opportunity to families for the holidays. Instead of providing gifts, they bring Christmas shopping to the children. Kids are able to buy presents for their family members and nothing costs more than \$.50. These gifts are also wrapped by volunteers. For many of these children, it is the first time they have been able to purchase gifts and experience giving instead of receiving.

C.O.P.S NE volunteers spend months preparing for this event. Seeking donations for the items, decorations for the store, and funding for the supplies is a full time job on its own. The generosity of local businesses truly drives such events. Without their support, many children would not be able to experience the true gift of giving.

Parents are not left out of this one of a kind experience. They also can shop in the Christmas Store for under \$3.00 per item. Food is also made available for the families at a very low price. Photos with Santa

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## Holidays at the Northeast Community Center

The holiday season brings together the community unlike any other time of the year to help others. While many are blessed this season, there are thousands of families struggling with the overwhelming financial burdens of Thanksgiving and Christmas. Colder weather further increases expenses of with the need for warm winter wear for children, higher heating bills, snow removal, and so much more. However, what really impacts parents is the fear that their children will not be able to experience the holidays like other children. No presents under the tree this year. No turkey on the table. No warm new clothing to protect them from the harsh elements of winter.

NECC helps address these concerns in simple, but important, ways, offering families the access to resources they need for the holidays. This year's Coats 4 Kids program provided 1468 coats and 693 other winter gear items. NECC was also able to extend the dates of the program and thus distributed 312 additional coats than if limited to the standard two weeks. This extension was a relief to many families who had only just heard of the program or had not previously been able to come to the Center. While visiting the center they also were connected with additional information to help them through the winter months. Families who were unaware of the SNAP energy assistance program were able to use the computer lab to make appointments This circle of information is one thing that makes NECC unique for Spokane.

The holiday season really begins around Halloween at NECC. Agencies start putting up fall decorations and gearing up for the winter months. Northeast Child Development Center brings their children around the center to trick-or-treat for items such as coloring sheets from our front desk and toothbrushes from Riverstone Dental Clinic. NDCDC also brings holiday cheer to their families around Thanksgiving. NorthwestConnect and St. Patrick's teamed up to bring a full Thanksgiving meal to 80 families, each delivered personally to their homes. They also participated in Tree of Sharing to give their children the opportunity to receive gifts for the holidays.



The Hillyard Senior Center had a Halloween costume party and many of their members came out for that annual celebration. This event is one of the most anticipated events of the year. All day at the center Dracula, flapper girls,

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are also available. All of this combined make for a very cheerful occasion and pleasant experience for the attendees.

C.O.P.S. has been part of the northeast neighborhoods since 1992 and plays a vital role within the community, keeping the residents safe. Lynn Weiler, currently serving as secretary, has been within the organization for the 21 years it has been operating. She is also one of the many people who work year long to make the Santa Store a success. "It is a lot of work, and sometimes we look at it and ask ourselves why we are doing it," said Weiler. "But then a young mom comes in, and she has a couple of kids and \$5 for Christmas and we can get her all set. Then we look at each other and promise to do it again next year."

The Santa Store is just one of many projects Weiler and the other volunteers of C.O.P.S. NE work on. NECC and the northeast neighborhoods have been very fortunate to have them participate in community outreach programs such as the Clean Up Days, Night out Against Crime, Gang Awareness services and many more. The Northeast Community Center has been fortunate to have them volunteer their time numerous for our events, furthering our success and impact on families.

The Santa Store has been operating for more than 10 years. NECC is very grateful for its positive impact within the community and we look forward to many years to come of working together.



**December 11, 2013**  
Reception: 6:30 PM ~ Curtain Time: 7:30 PM  
at **Spokane Civic Theatre**, 1020 N Howard Street  
Call (509)487-1603 or visit us online at  
[www.necca.myspokane.net/christmas\\_schooner.html](http://www.necca.myspokane.net/christmas_schooner.html)  
*Be sure to come early and enjoy a reception featuring refreshments and Silent Auction!*  
All proceeds go towards supporting NECC and the services they provide

witches, and all kinds of original costumes can be seen in the center. This party also features wagon rides, costume prizes, dancing, and games such as Pumpkin Chunkin.

NECC also works with two local organizations that hold their holiday event at the community center yearly: C.O.P.S. NE Santa Store the Has Beens and Gonna Bees Christmas Cheer. Over the years, these groups have brought Christmas to hundreds of families. NECC is fortunate to have the space and resources needed for these large events. Our facilities provide them a much needed gathering area for everything from the potluck lunches and shopping areas for the families.

The zip codes within Spokane the Northeast Community Center serves are the most impoverished in the city. According to a US Census Bureau study, the percent of Northeast neighborhoods families under the Federal Poverty Level is 21.7%, with 33.4% of these with children under 18. The per capita median income is \$15,697, which is \$8172 less than the city as a whole. These numbers reflect the importance of the Northeast Community Center for these families. Working together with other organizations to bring the resources to the families for the holidays helps alleviate some of the pressures associated with the season but there is much more the center does year round to promote self-sufficiency for our clients. While the holidays are important, a permanent lifestyle change opportunity is the best present of all.



The Northeast Community Center is proud to offer organizations such as the C.O.P.S. NE and Has Beens and Gonna Bees opportunities to reach out to the community to offer their services. However, the efforts behind making these events happen are costly. To provide staff, room access, and custodial NECC must rely even more on the Friends of the Center, The generosity of our supporters impacts families daily, whether it is with holiday assistance or access to our Information Access Center to utilize our computer lab. Our resources combined with those of our agencies are powerful tools in helping families become and remain self-sufficient.

### Become a Friend of the Center!

As you consider your year end giving, join us in supporting our families with your Friends of the Center investment of \$125 or with a gift of \$500 honoring your entire family.