



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Seniors Need Santa Too: Stocking Stuffers for Seniors Donation Drive Helps Disrupt an Epidemic of Loneliness Among Isolated, Elderly Canadians

Vancouver, BC - We often hear that Christmas is for the kids, however for the estimated 1.4 million seniors in Canada who report feelings of isolation and loneliness,¹ a kind gesture from an anonymous Santa during the holidays could be life changing.

Senior isolation is a growing epidemic in Canada. Studies show the effects of isolation and loneliness can have severe negative impacts on the health of seniors. One study found that lonely seniors have a 59% higher risk of physical and mental health decline, and a 45% greater risk of death. Other researchers have suggested that loneliness can be as dangerous as smoking 15 cigarettes a day or being an alcoholic.²

In an effort to curb loneliness among seniors during the holidays, [London Drugs](#) is partnering with more than 90 senior care organizations to continue its [Stocking Stuffers for Seniors](#) holiday donation drive, which will see gifts collected and delivered to approximately 17,000 seniors across Western Canada before Christmas.

“Just the act of receiving a gift helps to significantly improve the spirits of a senior and can have lasting mental and physical health benefits,” says **Jimmy Morrison, Community Relations Supervisor, Operation Friendship Seniors Society**. “Many seniors without family spend the season alone, and it can be an especially difficult time for them. The simple gesture of giving a gift shows our seniors that people care about them at a time of year when they tend to feel the most isolated and alone.”

The donation drive concept originated in British Columbia’s Okanagan, and expanded to Edmonton in 2015 with a goal to help 40 low-income seniors by providing them with simple gifts such as food, hygiene products or

¹ Source: Statistics Canada <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-003-x/2013010/article/11872-eng.htm>

² Source: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1745691614568352>

warmth items. The campaign has grown quickly to now include all 82 London Drugs locations in 35 cities across Western Canada.

Since the campaign started, approximately 24,000 packages have been delivered to seniors.

“The rapid growth of the Stocking Stuffers for Seniors program is a true testament to the care Canadians have for our aging population,” **says Perry Lubberding, London Drugs Store Manager.** “There are many great causes to support during the holiday season, and we are very proud that we have created a program that has resonated with so many people and has become part of their annual family holiday traditions.”

Morrison says the program is much more than gift-giving, and that Stocking Stuffers for Seniors is changing the way younger generations engage with the elderly population.

“Over the last few years, we have seen hundreds of families participate in the program, and many parents tell us that it’s a great way for their children to learn the importance of giving to, and supporting a generation of people who have given so much to our society. We hope that by connecting the younger generation with the older generation through a program like this, in future years the number of isolated and lonely seniors will be significantly reduced.”

To support **Stocking Stuffers for Seniors**, visit any [London Drugs](#) between November 18 and December 16 and take a tag with a senior’s wish list from the tree. From there, simply fulfill the items on the list and bring them back to the location where the tag was selected. The gifts will be delivered to seniors before the holidays.

POPULAR GIFTS FOR SENIORS

- Books or magazines
- Blankets and throws
- Kitchen essentials
- Candy or chocolate
- Board games or puzzles
- Slippers or warm socks
- Paper towels, tissues, and other paper products
- Warm clothes like gloves and scarves
- Travel mugs
- Gift cards for groceries and toiletries

Stocking Stuffers for Seniors participants and campaign supporters are being asked to use the [#StockingStuffersForSeniors](#) hashtag on social media to encourage others to get involved so more elderly Canadians can be supported at the holidays, as well as year-round.

About London Drugs

Founded in 1945, B.C.-based London Drugs has 82 stores in more than 35 major markets throughout British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba including its online store www.LondonDrugs.com. London Drugs offers consumers a range of products from digital cameras and cosmetics to computers and televisions. Renowned for its creative approach to retailing, the company employs more than 7,500 people with pharmacy and health care services being the heart of its business. Committed to innovation and superior customer

service, London Drugs has established itself as a reputable and caring company and continues to position itself for future growth and development.

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Photo inclusion:



Caption: Santa and his elves deliver gifts to Operation Friendship Seniors Society in Edmonton, Alberta.