



For Immediate Release
November 21, 2016

Santa for Seniors Holiday Donation Drive Aims to Support 2,000 Seniors

Popular Holiday Campaign Expands to Capital Region in its Second Year Helping Even More Seniors

Edmonton, AB – All Hannah wants for Christmas this year is a photo frame, books and for everyone to get better and feel happiness. Anne wants a blanket, slippers, Oilers stuff, as well as peace and love for the world.

These are the actual wish list items from two of Edmonton's inner-city seniors. Hannah and Anne are just two of approximately 2,000 senior residents who will have their personalized wish lists fulfilled this holiday season through the [London Drugs Santa for Seniors donation drive supporting Operation Friendship Seniors Society and Friends](#).

Now in its second year, the program started in 2015 with the goal of helping 40 of Operation Friendship's inner city seniors. However, the overwhelming outpouring of support from Edmontonians enabled organizers to bring gifts to all 350 residents at Operation Friendship, and another 150 gifts for use in their drop in centre.

This year, the program has expanded to include three new partners—North Edmonton Seniors Association (NESA), Youville Home and Sherwood Care—and will help to support approximately 2,000 seniors in the region.

The program allows Capital Region residents an easy way to provide meaningful or useful items to seniors who might not otherwise receive gifts or companionship during the holiday season. Like Hannah and Anne, the wish lists for each senior are completely personalized to items they select for their wish list.

"It's so humbling to read the wish lists that come through from the seniors, as most the items are truly modest, and some people only put one simple item on their lists," says **Perry Lubberding, London Drugs Store Manager**. "On occasion, we see a request for a Blu-ray DVD player, but for the most part people are asking for slippers, razors, travel mugs and treats like cookies or crackers. It's such simple things and it really puts things into perspective during the holiday season."

The response from residents in the Capital Region who want to support a senior has been remarkable, and it's truly their generosity that makes this program possible.

"The Santa for Seniors program has been a game changer for our organization," said **Jimmy Morrison, Operation Friendship Seniors Society Community Relations Supervisor**. "Not only were we able to support our 350 residents, but we were able to support our drop-in residence over the winter months last year. In addition, it really ignited a frenzy of support for us that extended after the holidays and carried over the rest of the year. We had more volunteers get in touch wanting to lend a hand, more organizations wanting to support our drop-in centre programs, and an increase in in-kind donations. We are so thankful for the support."

Anonymous santas can visit any [London Drugs](#) in Edmonton, Sherwood Park or St. Albert between November 21 and December 11 and take a tag with a senior's personalized wish list from the Santa for Seniors tree. They can then fulfill the items on the list and bring it back to the location in which they picked up the tag. Santa and his volunteer elves will wrap and deliver all personalized gifts on December 15, 2016.



“Last year, people went above and beyond in their giving to their adopted senior,” said **Lubberding**. “We saw hand crafted items, and hand drawn Christmas cards from youth included in the gift package to their adopted senior. It was incredibly heartfelt to see many of our seniors get not only items they need, but these extra touches that truly filled them with joy.”

Often, the visits from the gift-bearers are even more precious than the presents themselves. The human contact and social interaction spreads holiday cheer for older adults who do not have family close by with whom to spend the season.

10 POPULAR GIFTS FOR SENIORS

- Blankets or throws
- Slippers or socks
- Candy and chocolate
- Coffee or travel mugs
- Warm clothes such as gloves or scarves
- Paper products such as paper towels and tissues
- Gift cards for groceries and toiletries
- Books or magazines
- Board games or puzzles
- Kitchen essentials

Santa for Seniors supporters are being asked to Tweet or post a photo of their personalized tag using the #LDSantas hashtag to be entered to win a special prize package from London Drugs as thanks for their support of our seniors.

-30-

About Operation Friendship Senior Society

Operation Friendship Seniors Society is a non-profit society that provides community-based preventative social services to the seniors of Edmonton’s inner city. We provide safe, affordable non-institutional housing options.

About London Drugs

Founded in 1945, B.C.-based London Drugs currently has 79 stores in more than 35 major markets throughout British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Renowned for its creative approach to retailing, the company employs more than 7,000 people and carries a diverse range of health and consumer electronic products. With its strong commitment to innovation and customer appreciation, 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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