



Spreading the SCSA spirit

Guiding principal: We cultivate contribution and participation

The spirit of giving is built right into Smithers Community Services Association's mandate, with the guiding principle to "cultivate contribution and participation." At no other time is this more evident than over the holiday season, when SCSA spreads its community spirit throughout the Bulkley Valley.

Christmas Hampers

SCSA's most widely known holiday contribution is the Christmas Hampers program, which has been going for 30 years. Last year, 331 hampers containing food, toys, grocery vouchers and books were distributed to 1,030 people between Moricetown, Smithers and Telkwa. Almost one-third of those were children.

"To me, the season is hardest on kids whose family can't afford Christmas," says coordinator Anne Harfenist. "But people in the Bulkley Valley are amazingly generous with donations to help."

Community members can contribute non-perishable food items or gifts under \$25 at the Christmas Hampers depot (located in the Smithers Mall) starting Dec. 2. Cash donations can be made at the SCSA office or online at www.scsa.ca.

The Christmas Hampers program uses more volunteers than any other SCSA program. Last year, 171 volunteers, including 66 students, contributed a total 435 volunteer hours at the depot.

Volunteer Smithers

Volunteer Smithers is another SCSA program that is especially busy over the holiday season. The program provides opportunities for those looking to volunteer in the community and provides support to SCSA and other local organizations by connecting them with willing volunteers.

"Our volunteers contribute so much to the community, especially around the holiday season," program manager Jaime Freeman says. "Their generosity is amazing."



Anyone interested in joining Volunteer Smithers can apply by emailing jfreeman@scsa.ca. Volunteers are matched with suitable organizations according to their interests.

Smithers & District Transit

Smithers & District Transit System is funded by BC Transit, Town of Smithers, Village of Telkwa and Regional District of Bulkley Nechako. Each year the system's three drivers take time out of their busy holiday schedules to spread a little Christmas cheer.

The drivers volunteer their time to take local seniors on Christmas light tours, doing one tour each for residents at Bulkley Lodge and the Meadows. They usually fill the bus, which means roughly 15 seniors from each facility get a one-hour tour of the lights each year.

"They enjoy getting out and seeing the Christmas lights," program manager Mike Wyllie says. "It's a special outing for them, for sure."

The drivers also pick up seniors in Telkwa and Smithers and deliver them, free of charge, to a Christmas lunch at the Smithers Legion. They will also be parked outside Safeway for the "Stuff the Bus" campaign on Dec. 7, encouraging shoppers to contribute to the Christmas Hampers program.

The SCSA spirit is about bringing people together to help one another out during a season that can be both joyful and stressful. SCSA is celebrating 40 years of spreading community spirit by publishing a series of articles about our current programs and how they fit into our guiding principles. We hope you'll join us in this celebration.