

City of Vacaville

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HOLIDAY CONNECTION SEEKS VOLUNTEERS FOR HOLIDAYS, ADVISORY BOARD

Holiday Connection, formerly Senior Santa, reaches out to seniors who live alone or in residential care facilities and who have little contact with family or friends. The Holiday Connection Committee consists of a consortium of agencies and volunteers who care about isolated seniors throughout Solano County.

The group is now soliciting volunteers to serve on the Advisory Board as well as to assist with the holiday season. Please call Donna Fields at (707) 784-8205 or Audrey Calder at (707) 469-6673 for more information or if you are interested in volunteering.

A Short History of the Senior Santa/Holiday Connection Program

In 1995 the Senior Santa program was started to serve clients in various Health and Social Services Department programs. The program was designed to be a gift-giving program. It was expanded to include a consortium of agencies and volunteers serving seniors in Solano County. Members of the original consortium included Catholic Social Services (Friendship Services), Florence Douglas Senior Center in Vallejo, Rio Vista Senior Center, McBride Senior Center in Vacaville, Benicia Community Action Center, Solano County Health and Social Services Department, Solano County Community Council, Area Agency on Aging and volunteers throughout the County.

(More)

In the fall of 2001, the group realized that it was time to implement some formal planning and structure for Senior Santa. Until then, Senior Santa had been operating without written by-laws or a formal board. During spring 2002, Senior Santa was renamed "Holiday Connection" to reflect the diversity of the clients served. The mission of Holiday Connection was to continue to serve seniors who are lonely and isolated and without the program would not have a holiday gift. Officers were elected, by-laws were written and the Solano Community Foundation became the group's fiscal agent. The Advisory Board and interested volunteers now meet monthly rather than just in the fall before the December holidays.

How Holiday Connection Works

Social workers, public health nurses, and facility staff identify the seniors for the program. They ask the seniors what kind of gift they would like that costs about \$35. Then, community groups, families or individuals sign up to be sponsors. Sponsors can buy, wrap and deliver the gifts or they can give money for Holiday Connection volunteers to do the shopping, wrapping and delivery. From 2003 to the present, there have been ever increasing requests. Holiday Connection is now trying to help seniors throughout the year in emergencies, such as the need for food or clothing.

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