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### **Needy families receive toys and food from the Santa Claus Shop**

*Arapahoe County supports community program with warehouse space, food*

LITTLETON, CO. --- More than 2,000 needy children will receive gifts this holiday through the work of the Arapahoe Santa Claus Shop which helps low-income parents with gift giving and food boxes.

Since 1958, the Arapahoe Santa Claus Shop has been collecting toys for children. Funded by donations, this volunteer, non-profit organization provides gifts to needy families during the holiday season.

On Dec. 7 and 8, parents chose from hundreds of donated toys, games, bikes, dolls and books to find the perfect gift for their child. Many of the toys were cleaned, assembled and repaired by volunteers who put in more than 16,000 hours of their personal time to make the program a success. Some volunteers are already collecting and repairing dolls in preparation for next year's Shop.

Prior to 1991, the Santa Claus Shop was homeless, like many of the families it supports during the holiday season. It was forced to find new locations each year until Arapahoe County offered to give it a home. Every year, the Santa Claus Shop sets up shop in Arapahoe County's multi-purpose building.

"I don't know what we'd do without the County's generosity," said Lora Drose, Santa Claus Shop Director. "Arapahoe County provides everything we need to continue to operate our program. They also provide boxes of food for families."

While some Arapahoe County employees donated canned food, others helped fill 500 boxes of food through The Emergency Food Assistance Program. Each family received a food box filled with canned fruits and vegetables, cereal, powdered milk, and other USDA commodities.

"We donate this food to the Santa Claus Shop because it's the right thing to do," said Karen Martinez, Clerical Specialist for Arapahoe County. "If you've ever been in a situation where food is scarce, you're extremely grateful that someone would ever think of you."

For five years, Arapahoe County has donated food boxes to help supplement the toys that needy families receive through the Santa Claus Shop. The partnership helps alleviate many of the concerns low-income families deal with during the holidays and helps make the season brighter one family at a time. For more information about the Santa Claus Shop, visit [www.arapahoeshop.org](http://www.arapahoeshop.org).

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