

Still time to be Santa to a Senior in Haldimand

By [Tamara Botting](#) News Editor
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This article has been updated to note that the deadline extension for donations only applies to monetary donations.

With Dec. 25 fast approaching, Santa needs a few more elves to help make sure no one gets left off his list.

“We are still looking for donors for gifts (and) financial donations to go toward purchasing,” said Nicole Selby, one of the steering committee members for Santa to a Senior — Haldimand Edition.

Through this grassroots initiative, older adults in Haldimand County, Six Nations of the Grand River and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation who might not otherwise receive any sort of gift over the holidays are given a present.

As part of the registration process, the recipients are asked to provide a wish list so donors have an idea of what gifts they might like, so it's more personalized. However, the organizing committee also accepts generic gifts to distribute, as not everyone provides a wish list, and sometimes there are last-minute additions to the recipient list.

“All of (the recipients) are involved in some sort of support programming within the community,” Selby said. “So, that means they're in an assisted living-type situation, or they are in a facility, or they are identified as persons needing assistance within the community for a variety of reasons.”

Like many other community service initiatives right now, Santa to a Senior — Haldimand Edition is seeing the double challenge of a greater need in the community, but a drop in donors.

The steering committee is hoping that for some, it's just a matter of forgetting to sign up in the busyness of the season. That's why while they were originally planning to have Dec. 15 as the last day for donors to contribute, they're extending the deadline to Dec. 18 for monetary donations only.

The group is also looking for businesses that can partner with them so they can purchase gifts at discounted prices or in bulk, using the monetary donations they've received.

For next year, the group is hoping to find a volunteer with a specific skill set to help streamline their process.

“We are looking for somebody with technical expertise to help us with a web page that can be used by donors to select their specific recipient with the (wish list) details attached, that will feed the information into both their email as a confirmation, and our back end as a registration piece,” Selby said.

This will help make it easier for donors to choose recipients asking for items they want to shop for, and cut back on some of the labour-intensive administrative work of matching donors to recipients that currently has to be done behind the scenes.

If anyone wants to get involved, they can find more information and register at santatoasenior.ca.

The committee noted that with the deadline fast approaching, they are receiving a large volume of emails and calls daily, so they will likely need at least 24 hours to respond to messages. But also, Selby said, they are deeply grateful for all of the support from the community.