

Denver presents Santa's Distinguished Service



Elves with the Award 2016!!

July 2016

DENVER - For the past five years, Asnake Deferse hasn't worried about buying his children Christmas presents. That's because the struggling father and other parents who live in Sun Valley, the poorest, most run-down neighborhood in the state, have had visits from Santa's Elves.

"Santa's Elves has been a blessing to the Denver Housing Authority community," said Tsehai Teklehaimanot, DHA Program Specialist.

The DHA recognized seven years of community service by the nonprofit, [Santa's Elves – Kids Giving to Kids](#) on Wednesday, by presenting it with the DHA's Distinguished Service Award 2016.

"This award is incredible, because it comes from the very people we serve," said Executive Director Laura Lochen. "Yes, we give their children gifts so they can have something under their trees. But they give us gifts too – their smiles, their hugs and thanks. Their tears of joy make all of the hard work, worth it."

The nonprofit says it is only successful because of their amazing, dedicated volunteers and supportive DHA employees, since it began in 2010.

Santa's Elves connects children in Colorado who want to help others, with children who live in poverty in the Denver projects. The volunteers or "elves" give presents to those kids, face-to-face, around the holidays.

Almost one-half of the 1,448 residents in Sun Valley are children younger than 18, and 78-percent of families live in poverty, according to neighborhood data compiled by the Piton Foundation. The average household income is \$5,164 per year.

Studies show kids who volunteer do better in school, develop leadership skills and are less likely to get pregnant and try drugs. Children who help others through giving or volunteering build an understanding their actions and ideas matter and make a difference.

Want your kids to volunteer and be an elf? Visit [SantasElvesDenver.org](#) and join our next giving event on December 10, 2016. Registration for the event opens in mid-October, 2016!