

Need rises sharply as charity drives move online



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Lumen Employees Asked To Contribute to Local Charity Drives

Todd Stiller has been bringing holiday happiness to local underserved children in the Seattle-metro area for over a decade. His brainchild started as a small toy drive among Lumen, then named CenturyLink, employees in 2009 as a chance to give back to the community during the holiday season.

“We raised about \$500 that year and we were ecstatic,” said **Stiller, Senior Fiber Marketing Manager at Lumen Technologies**. “But the technicians of this company are such giving people that it was a shame they didn’t get to see the kids’ faces light up when they received their new toys. We needed a way to loop the employees into the final presentation.”



That's when the little toy drive Todd started evolved into a toy parade in 2013, with Lumen techs personally delivering truckloads of toys to smiling, grateful children across Seattle.

"We received so much positive press around it, we had to add a summertime golf tournament to keep the energy and momentum going!" Stiller explained. "Soon, Target agreed to let us shop before the store opened so we could fill cartloads of toys for the kids – we ended up bringing Christmas to about 1,000 families last year!"

The Salvation Army in the Seattle-metro area has been a proud partner with Lumen on this holiday project for years.

"We try to align ourselves with companies who want to make their communities a better place, and we definitely see that in Lumen," said **Captain Jonathan Harvey, General Secretary for The Salvation Army**. "This is so very often a time families get together and children receive a special treat, which is something we want to provide for families that don't have the means."

In previous years, volunteers would organize the donated toys and categorize them by gender and age group. Then, deserving parents were invited to what is now Lumen Field to shop for gifts for their family at no charge.

This year, due to COVID-19, it's going to look a little different.

"The need grew by 50% on average nationwide when the virus hit," explained Captain Harvey. "This year, we humbly ask that if you have the means to do so, dig a little deeper and donate a bit more because the need is going to be so great for so much longer."

"While we raised \$15,000 last year, our goal this year is \$5,000 since it's virtual, which makes it hard to get the word out to would-be donors," said Stiller. "We're still going to have the personal shopping experience with the parents in Seattle, but on a much smaller scale."

One good thing about going digital with the drive, though, is that it's now open across the country.

"The virtual drive is available to everyone now, not just us in Seattle. But it still has that local feel, because if you donate money from Broomfield, that money will stay in Broomfield," explained Stiller.

"We're just changing how we do it, not what we do," said Captain Harvey. **"It's just a different vehicle to deliver the same services we are known for this year, in a safer touchless way."**

If you wish to physically donate toys, you can drop off your donation at any Lumen Field garage in the Seattle-metro area before Thursday, Dec. 10. The personal shopping in Lumen Field begins on Thursday, Dec. 17. To donate, please visit the [CenturyLink Holiday Giving Campaign landing page](#).

If you are convinced the only phrase appropriate for 2020 is "Bah humbug!", let's "take a cup of kindness yet" and bring Lumen *Holiday Happiness* efforts nationwide to meet our communities where they need it most. Check out how Lumen employees are spreading holiday cheer nationwide – without necessarily "singing loud for all to hear:"

- **NATIONWIDE:** Lumen is teaming up with [The Salvation Army](#) to meet the increasing need of underserved families by offering a virtual Holiday Giving Campaign. This digital drive will keep all monies donated local – so if your sleigh is parked in Monroe, LA, your donation will stay in Monroe, LA. Employees can play Santa by contributing monetarily via the [CenturyLink Holiday Giving Campaign landing page](#) anytime.
- **COLORADO:** Once again, employees in the Centennial State can sponsor a deserving child's holiday wish list through [A Precious Child](#) – a Denver-based organization dedicated to helping local children to reach their full potential with resources to overcome their difficult circumstances. Lumen has agreed to sponsor 400 children, committing us to

providing over 1200 gifts at a total value of over \$20,000. All hopeful elves can select a child to sponsor via Lumen's team webpage, but make sure that all packages shipped directly to the organization's Broomfield location will be received by Wednesday, Dec. 9.

- **COLORADO**: Continuing this year, employees in the Denver-metro area can bring holiday gifting to a worthy child at Denver Children's Home through their Adopt A Child program. Denver Children's Home is Colorado's oldest nonprofit, and its Adopt A Child program serves children with chronic mental health problems and learning disabilities. Each child has a 5 gift wishlist with each gift valued around \$30. All hopeful elves can select a child to sponsor via [Lumen's team wishlist webpage](#), but make sure that all packages are UNWRAPPED and shipped directly to or dropped off at 1501 Albion Street in Denver by Friday, Dec. 11.
- **MINNESOTA**: If you are a Santa's helper based in the St. Paul region, Lumen is working with [Casa de Esperanza](#) this season – a local emergency center for women and children affected by domestic violence. Lumen employees will be providing winter clothes, household items, and holiday gift boxes to women and children transitioning to a safer home environment over the holidays. Those wishing to donate items to the drive can either ship items from the [list of needed supplies](#) directly to the organization at 540 Fairview Ave, Suite 200, St. Paul, MN 55104. Holiday gifts should be shipped by Wednesday, Dec. 9. Financial donations can be made on line at <https://secure.donationpay.org/casadeesperanza/>.

<https://news.lumen.com/Lumen-holiday-giving>