

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New nonprofit brings Christmas back to Northern Colorado Kids and Families

Wellington, CO, September 12, 2024: When Santa Cops of Larimer County announced that it would cease operations after the 2023 holiday season, some may have despaired that Christmas was canceled for some families and what that meant for the future.

A new group of Christmas enthusiasts comprised of Veterans and First Responders stepped up and have launched NoCo Santa Squad, a 501(c)3 serving those in need, and will continue to be the helping hand to deliver joy and happiness to local children and families. The goal is not only to bring joy at Christmas, but throughout the year for birthdays or other occasions that meet their criteria for those families struggling to make a special day for their young ones.

Santa Cops of Larimer County organized and led the charitable toy drive program since 1987, but the group said on social media late 2023 that an inability to find an affordable lease to warehouse their proverbial sleigh each Christmas meant that they could no longer gather toys for children in Larimer County.

Marty Gerlach of Wellington CO, the founder of the new nonprofit, ran a toy drive in his shop in 2022 and two toy drives in 2023, with hopes of passing the proceeds along to organizations like Santa Cops of Larimer County and a similar organization in Weld County, Weld Elves but the former shut its doors, and the latter is fortunate enough to have enough donations to operate successfully, he said, so the obvious next step was to make his own organization. Their nonprofit became official earlier this year and now the work begins.

"We've had a really good response," Gerlach said earlier this year during an interview with the Reporter Herald. "Everywhere, anybody you talk to, they're like, 'Wow, you guys are picking up the slack for the Santa Cops.' And it's going to be tough to fill their shoes, I'll tell you, because they were around for over 30 years. And we've got a lot to learn. The main thing is that we need donations, sponsors and volunteers."

The Inaugural NoCo Santa Squad Shotgun Clay Shoot Fundraiser kicks off October 5th at Great Guns in Nunn and support on every level is crucial. Shooters, sponsors, and volunteers are critical to the success of the event and the efforts by the Squad. <https://nocosantasquad.org/first-annual-santa-squad-clay-shoot/>

Find out more on their FB page or website <https://nocosantasquad.org/> or call (970) 31SANTA (970) 317-2682.

About NoCo Santa Squad: NoCo Santa Squad is organized and formed by Veterans and First Responders to provide children and families in Northern Colorado gifts during holidays, birthdays and times of need.

NoCo Santa Squad is an equal opportunity organization and will not allow discrimination based upon age, ethnicity, ancestry, gender, national origin, disability, race, size, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, or any other status prohibited by applicable law.