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2020

Holiday Memories

Featuring

**Shop local on Small Business Saturday
Community shares Christmas memories**

**WHS horticulture class to
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From Your Friends At
Weiser School District

Holiday Memories

The season has begun when we celebrate our families, our friends and the holidays.

We gathered a few holiday memories from people in the community to share. We hope

you all enjoy the season and create your own memories that will last for years to come.



Ron Shirts and his nine siblings gather together on Christmas Eve for a traditional family hay ride. The family, which consists of around 60 family members, embark on two hay wagons and ride around the fields singing Christmas carols, drink hot cocoa and entertain the cows in the field. Above Leslie Shirts, right, is enjoying the hay ride with her daughter Ellie on her lap. From left is Willy Shirt, Mattie Shirts, Kate McQueen, Jack Shirts (green jacket) and Ron Shirts, back left.

Caroling around the fields on hay wagons is a favorite tradition for the Shirts’ family

Ten siblings and their families gather to celebrate the holiday season

by Nicole Miller

Caroling and getting together with extended family are quintessential elements of the holiday season for many families. For the family of Ron and Leslie Shirts, these two traditions are not only favorites of Christmas Eve but are also done with an unique twist.

Ron Shirts is the youngest of 10 children and each year, all 10 siblings, their children and grandchildren gather together for Christmas Eve. In total, around 60 family members gather for this event. Ron’s brothers and sisters have all attended every gathering.

The celebration consists of chili and clam chowder. Everyone eats their fill of soup, the fa-

vorite element of their oldest son Willy.

For the past 12 years, the family has compiled two large hay wagons with two five-gallon Igloo coolers filled with hot chocolate and the hay wagon takes family members on a tour of the fields.

To spread the Christmas spirit, the couple said the family will sing carols to their cow neighbors. The younger children have been known to squeal as their bovine audience run to the wagons for a front row seat.

Ron and Leslie’s children Sophia, Jack and Ellie all said that the time with their cousins is their favorite part. They all said that it is extra fun when there is snow. They always hope for

enough snow to tie sleds to the back of the wagons and take turns sledding behind the wagons.

As a special tribute to his dad who passed away five years ago, Ron wears his dad’s old cowboy hat as he drives the tractor. Everyone gathers blankets and wears their warmest winter gear. Between the hot chocolate and being huddled together, there is always plenty of warmth to go around and usually a warm spot by the fireplace outside for those who want to warm themselves after.

“All the families also bring presents and it’s often complete mayhem, with lots of food, fun and kids running around. We always have a great time,” Shirts said.





Going to the mountains during the holiday season is a fun adventure especially when friends and family are included. Lucy Hickey remembers one winter when her family and her best friend Halle Seward went up to find a Christmas tree and play in the snow. They ventured up to the mountains in Seward’s grandfather’s ‘cool bus.’ The group built snowmen and enjoyed sledding behind a pickup. Above Hickey is enjoying playing in the snow with Seward. This adventure is one of Lucy’s favorite Christmas memories.

Celebrating the season with friends and family

by Lucy Hickey

It was snowing. The day had finally arrived. The day we would get our Christmas tree. Halle’s family was to meet at our house in only a few hours. I was so excited I was practically leaping with anticipation. The next hours were going to feel like eternities.

“They’re here!” my mom yelled. I sprang up and ran to the living room. From there I could see a car and a big yellow bus pulling into the driveway. The bus was Halle’s grandpa Frankie’s. He got it a few years before and took a few letters off so it was the “cool bus.” I pulled my snow pants on and scurried off to meet them in the driveway. Once I saw Halle, I became overjoyed. “Come on,” I yelled to my mom. “Let’s go!”

Just then, my dad walked out the door with a piping hot thermos of hot chocolate. I couldn’t wait to drink it once we were up in the cold. We climbed the mountain in the “cool bus,” with our parents right on our tail. Us kids luckily got to ride in the bus without any adults besides Halle’s grandpa.

As I looked up at the mountain to which we were going, all I could see was a white, thick, heavy blanket of snow. This was going to be fun.

Once we arrived on the mountain, there was no one to be seen. All of us kids hopped out and ran to the snow. Without any gloves on yet, our hands were as pink as strawberries. I got all my gear on including gloves, coat, and my hat, I ran for the hills.

While Halle and I were building a snowman, my parents and sister went to look for our new tree. Meanwhile, most of the adults stayed in the bus to catch up and stay warm.

When my parents rounded the corner, I could see the big, luscious Christmas tree they were pulling.

“Did you find a good one?” I asked my dad.

“Of course,” he said. “Are you ready for some hot chocolate?”

“Yep!” I said, with rosy red cheeks.

Later on, we decided to go hooky bobbing, where we attach the sleds to the truck with a rope. Halle’s sister and cousins were up first. I was sitting on the tailgate watching with Brandon, Emma, and Kenzi. They were having a blast. I decided to lean forward and rest my elbows on my knees.

My dad sped up and I couldn’t get myself to lean back. I was falling, and I knew it was going to happen quickly. I fell forward, hit the icy road, and slammed my head on the ground. My dad stopped the truck. Just when I thought it was over, the sleds had a delayed reaction and ended up running into me. Brandon jumped off the tailgate and helped me up. I looked at my sister and Kenzi and found that they were laughing hysterically. I was not.

They helped me back onto the truck and I continued to cry. All I wanted was my mom, but she was sitting on the bus talking to Jen. She didn’t see me fall, but eventually she came out and I told her what had happened.

Although I fell, I ended up having a good rest of the day along with a slight headache.

Once we were back at my house, we decided it was time to decorate the Christmas tree. We filled it with the prettiest bulbs you had ever seen and beautiful string lights that glowed with happiness. The amazing pine needle aroma filled the air. As I sat on the couch gazing at our glorious new tree, I realized that Christmas truly is my favorite time of the year.





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Weiser is coming alive with holiday cheer. The City of Weiser dressed up the downtown corridor with holiday greeting banners, wreaths and lights last week. Times Square and Weiser’s historic train depot will be aglow with festive lights. Many businesses are preparing for Black Friday and Small Business Saturday. Take advantage of the unique gifts and support small businesses. Above Bee Tree Folk School, located below the Pythian Castle, is full of holiday cheer. *Photo by Mary Phipps*

Support local retailers on Small Business Saturday

by Mary Phipps

In 2010, American Express brought forward Small Business Saturday as an initiative to prompt customers to shop and dine at local businesses on the Saturday after Thanksgiving.

Falling between Black Friday and Cyber Monday, Small Business Saturday (SBS) is intended to encourage shoppers to support small, locally owned and independent businesses rather than focus solely on larger chain stores. The Senate officially recognized SBS in 2011.

“Small Business Saturday is a national event that just is for everybody to get out and support small businesses after Black Friday,” said Sally Frye of Peoples Furniture. “It’s just an opportunity for people to really think about their holiday purchases and promote doing it [for] small businesses rather than the big box stores.”

Weiser retailers like Peoples Furniture will be offering special deals and promotions to bring shoppers through the doors the Saturday after Thanksgiving to serve as a reminder to support and buy from the independent businesses in town.

Peoples Furniture will be offering deals both Friday and Saturday, as well as hot cider and other goodies to offer customers.

Other businesses across the area will also be offer-



ing goodies as well as debuting products, specials, and displays. Frye said she has noticed a real influx of customers on both Black Friday and SBS and encourages others to recognize how meaningful the day is.

“Small Business Saturday, I think people are really getting aware of it,” said Frye. “It’s nice to have people come to support small businesses. It really is putting money back into your community,” said Frye.

Patrick Nauman of Weiser Classic Candy was one of the first businesses in downtown Weiser to promote SBS in 2012. For Nauman, his entire focus is now on SBS rather than Black Friday.

The holiday itself is geared toward main street businesses, he said. Black Friday and Cyber Monday both appear to have more

of a drive toward larger box stores that are sourced out of the area and the opportunity to celebrate and focus on smaller businesses is one to embrace.

“That’s where I have always felt the rebirth of an economy across the country needs to start on main street,” said Nauman. “It just makes more sense to try and drive traffic into downtown.”

At Weiser Classic Candy, there are several different sales featured on retail items. A special on hot cocoa is ran all day along with different lunch specials and free samples will be handed out.

Because the Weiser Memorial Hospital Foundation’s annual Festival of Trees has been cancelled, Weiser Classic Candy will continue the tradition of decorating a tree. The tree will be displayed in the store and shoppers can

bid on the tree through a silent auction. The funds raised will be dedicated to the WCC Entrepreneurial Scholarship.

A surge in business has been noted since SBS began to be advertised and promoted around Weiser, said Nauman. At least half of the customers that visit the store the day of have expressed their desire to shop specifically small business for the day, he said. Extra signage will be in place the day of and Weiser Classic Candy will offer the first 150 customers a free reusable tote bag.

“I’m excited to see what this year may bring,” said Nauman.

“[I would] encourage everybody every day of the year, but especially on that day, to get out and shop local,” said Nauman. “Also, research what Weiser has to offer.”

While Oval Metcalf of Chris’ Book Corner is out, Nicole Sharp has taken over running the local used bookstore.

Sharp said she is excited for SBS, as well as decorating for Christmas and displaying books in new unique ways. She has been cleaning and reorganizing the store and will continue running the store as long as she is needed.

SBS has been a popular event in the Weiser area, she said, and she has been brainstorming her own ideas for different specials.

A bingo game will add to the festive fun by the Weiser Chamber of Commerce, with cards featuring several downtown businesses to visit, buy from and receive a stamp.

“It’s a big deal nationwide,” said Sharp.

The Mystic Sisters, a newer business found in the Weiser downtown area, is excited to see the support from the community for SBS.

Amie Van Curen, co-owner of The Mystic Sisters, said there will be several bath kits, crystals, and gift bundles featured on SBS. Many specials are in the works from crystal kits and a \$4 scarf blowout. Layaway is offered at the store. An Alice in Wonderland themed Christmas tree will be in place and decorated.

“We’re just slowly working on getting ready for Christmas season,” said Van Curen. “Our biggest thing is we want to

give back to our community. We’re just hoping to bring a little bit of beauty and interest into Weiser.”

SBS is Nov. 28. Peoples Furniture is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and is located at 525 State St. Weiser Classic Candy is open 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday and is located at 449 State St. Chris’ Book Corner is open 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday and is located at 322 State St. The Mystic Sisters is open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday and is located at 312 State St.

There are a multitude of small businesses to visit in Weiser, including The Flower Basket, with flower arrangements, balloons, plushes, and country home décor and can be found at 308 State St. between 9 a.m. and 12 p.m. on Saturday. CaseyGirl Designs is located at 442 State St. and will be featuring several specials for SBS including their popular sale on large Scrabble style letters between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Saturday. RC Pawn is located at 19 East Main St. and customers can buy, sell and trade. Artful Bon’s is located at 35 West Idaho St., Marbella Pottery Painting, Mosaics and Wine is located at 36 West Court St., and the Golden Horse Restaurant has reopened their dine-in option for customers and is located at 1 E. Main St.

Many more business options can be found in Weiser and customers are encouraged to visit and help especially on SBS.



Christmas 2017 was a special year for Ashlynn Strasser when she came up with the idea to make a pillow for her GG (great-grandma), who was living in a nursing home. She made her a soft, beautiful blue pillow. It was extra special when she found out that her GG slept with it every night. A Christmas tradition for the Strasser family is to re-enact the Christmas Nativity, sing 'Silent Night' and receive Christmas pajamas from Santa. It is the special things we do for others that make Christmas memorable.

Making the perfect gift

by Ashlynn Strasser

It was 2017, and I had the greatest idea in the history of great ideas. I was going to make GG, my great-grandma, a brand-new pillow for Christmas. I wanted this Christmas to be the most memorable Christmas for her, and a new pillow was the best choice. It would be softer than any nursing home pillow.

When I told my mom this brilliant idea, she immediately turned it down. As stubborn as I am, I didn't let her stop me. I was determined.

After begging with large puppy eyes, my mother finally gave in to my master plan. I clapped with joy, my mind racing of all the designs I could use. When we finally left to get the supplies I needed, I decided I wanted to make a heart shaped pillow with a face on it.

We had arrived at Michael's Craft Store to get fabric and thread and I told my mom my design. This time her argument won though, and I settled on a regular square pillow.

I searched the aisles high and low for the perfect fabric. I studied each fabric, exotic pinks, monster trucks, sequins, stripes, and fairies. There were Christmas trees, candy canes, log cabins, gingerbread cookies, glittering reds, and greens. Then I found it, and it was perfect. I had found a beautiful, soft, blue floral fabric.

After we had gotten the fabric and blue string, my mom helped me set up the sewing machine then sent me to work. I sat there,

determined to make the best gift for my great-grandma.

Days passed on, and I had finally finished my glorious gift, but now I had to wait. I was not going to my mom's parents, Papa and Shorty's, house for Christmas this year, but to Grandma and Grandpa's. I would have to bring my gift with us to Thanksgiving for Shorty to give to GG.

I waited for long and agonizing weeks, counting down the days till I could give my gift to trusting hands. When the day finally came for us to pack into our car, I was fanatical about getting to the house. I didn't sleep a wink the entire way to Wyoming.

After we arrived at their house, I quickly showed Shorty my creation and asked her to give it to her mom for me. She smiled at me and told me that GG would love it.

December had finally arrived and I was really excited. I couldn't wait to hear news of GG's reaction to the pillow I made her.

The days came and went until Christmas Eve was soon upon us. I was in Oregon with my dad's family and we were happily playing out the Christmas Nativity. I thought a lot about GG's reaction to the gift and couldn't wait to hear the news from Shorty.

Santa came and gave us all each a gift. Then the cousins sang "Silent Night," and we opened up our Christmas pajamas.

The girls went to the back room to receive our homemade nightgowns. Grandma had just

started the tradition of making each girl a nightgown, and I believe this particular year, I had received a cheetah print dress. We ran off, slipping the dresses over our heads, then one by one squeezed ourselves onto the stairs for a picture.

The next day finally came, and I switched into my pajamas that Shorty had given me for Christmas. We went to open our presents from underneath the glistening Christmas tree. It was the day that GG received her gift and little did I know that it was already on its way to her.

Later that day we called Shorty to tell her "thank you" for the annual gifts, pajamas, a book, and a Christmas ornament. When it was finally my turn, I remembered I was really excited, and I forgot to ask about GG.

The next time I got to see Shorty, however, she told me how happy GG was to get that pillow and told me that she slept with it every night. I was very happy to hear the news. She had been losing her memory and rarely remembered things, but this to me showed that she remembered something from me.

On Aug. 9, 2018, GG died. I hadn't seen her since Thanksgiving of 2017, but I remembered how happy I was to make the pillow for her. I remembered how Shorty had told me that GG had slept with it every night, and it made me wish that I had seen her that Christmas. It made me realize that getting gifts isn't what Christmas is all about, it's about giving and making others happy.

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Tatem Clary’s family, Toby, Dana, Quincy and Tripp Clary, her grandma Sue Slyter, aunt D’Ann Slyter and Chef Keith Bryant with the help of many volunteers and donors make the annual community Thanksgiving dinner happen. There is much preparation to be done prior to Thanksgiving day. Above Tatem, right, and Lucy Hickey get the napkins and utensils ready for the delicious feast.

The holiday season of giving starts with Thanksgiving

by Tatem Clary

Thanksgiving starts off the holidays in my family and we do things a little differently than other families do. Every Thanksgiving my family and our friends make a Thanksgiving meal for the people in our community who can’t make their own meal. My mom and dad are the main organizers for the whole event. People in our town usually donate turkeys and other food for us to use, and some people donate money to help out. It takes a lot of people to make the event suc-

cessful. The day before Thanksgiving, my mom, dad, siblings, aunt, grandma, and Keith (the best cook I know) meet up at the Weiser Senior and Community Center and we prepare the turkeys. I always end up having the job of buttering the inside of the turkey, while my sister has the easy job of spreading the seasoning. After we are all done, we head home to get a good night’s rest before waking up bright and early. When we (my family, Keith, and our friends) get to the Senior Center, everyone starts their jobs

and gets to work. I always wash the potatoes, set-up the tables, and desserts. Then I help with the deliveries. We have to pack up about 100 to 200 orders with what each family wants. Luckily, I get to help test out the food to see if it is good. My dad has gotten really good at making the mashed potatoes, so I get to test them out. I am telling you, they are amazing. They are so soft and fluffy. The other thing I get to test out is Keith’s gravy. It’s the best gravy in the world. When we eat the gravy and the mashed potatoes together, it is

heaven. Now when people start to get to the Senior Center for the meal, things get hectic. There is food all over the place, people asking to see my parents, and the phone ringing off the hook to get a delivery. Once we start to get back into the groove of things, then it gets easier. I also have a job of asking if people need more coffee, water, and other things like that. It’s always funny to me when the old people think I am 9, when actually I am older, and call me weird names like sweetie pie or honey.

Once everybody starts leaving, then the other families leave to go do their Thanksgiving at home, and we stay to eat there. Finally, when we are all together, we start eating our meal while laughing and telling each other about the interaction we had with people that day. Thanksgiving is the start of the holiday season and for most, it’s all about a dinner with family, but I am lucky enough to share mine with my family and the community. I love it and I hope to keep the tradition going when I get older.

Christmas is more than the gifts received it is family who makes it special

by Addison Anderson

It was one of those feelings where you can’t describe how perfect it was. It was Christmas Eve, the most anticipated part of my year. Frankly, I think that the anticipation is the best part of Christmas. After I had opened the gifts on Christmas morning, I often felt, “oh well, that’s over.” This happened every year until last Christmas. I had gotten the best collection of gifts that year. On Christmas Eve, as our tradition goes, we got pajamas. Another surprise followed when my mom brought out some blankets. They were hand-crocheted by my grandma. She had made them with what was quite possibly the world’s fluffiest yarn. It was cream colored with a dark teal border. My grandma gave me that specific color because a few months before she had crocheted stuffed animals and she gave me a turtle with a grayish, light blue color. My grandma had given me a blue color again because she said they would match. When my family went on our weekly visit to my grandma, she was always crocheting. At first, they were made as gifts to bring to baby showers and the like. My grandma found that she really likes to crochet, and that it was a good pastime. Every time we went to visit, there was a new array of colorful yarn being woven into a blanket. Now, all we had to do was wait for Christmas Eve. My cousins, Rose, Lily, and Zailey, live in Boise, so they are relatively close (pun intend-

ed). We see them about once a month and this time, we went to their house. There, my aunt gave me one of my favorite things I have ever received. She gave me a canvas with a design printed onto it. It was a paint by number, with at least 1,000 spots to paint. It was a house being lifted by hundreds of balloons. It wasn’t from the movie, but it reminded me of the Pixar movie “Up.” My cousins got the same gift from their mom, so we all painted them together. My painting took a few weeks to finish, even if I was doing it for hours every day. It might have taken so long because of my lack of skill, but it was also difficult to paint the small designs with my paint brush. Sometimes, I would have to paint a bright orange blob in the middle of a dark background. I didn’t realize that in the end, it would all fit together. Like that painting, that Christmas was a collection of all the wonderful memories that made me recognize it as my favorite. All the orange blobs that put my Christmas together. Although these were labeled as my favorite gifts, it is really the people who gave them to me I remember. My grandma spent countless hours making blankets for every one of my cousins. That is no small feat, I have 50 family members on that side. I remember the conversations my cousins and I had. Christmas time isn’t about the gifts we receive, but the people we share Christmas with.



Addison Anderson enjoys decorating cookies at Christmas time. Her best memories are of the people who gave her a favorite gift and sharing Christmas with the people who mean so much to her.



The Weiser High School Agriculture Department added a new project to the horticulture curriculum this year. Poinsettias are a popular holiday plant and adds beautiful color to bring in the holiday spirit. As a fundraiser the class raised poinsettias that can be purchased at Matthew’s Farm Tree sale on Nov. 27 and 28 and at the high school beginning Dec. 1. Pictured here, from left with the poinsettias they grew are Elsie King, Jade Hovey and Brie Barbot.

High school ag department to sell poinsettias

Horticulture class has four varieties available to compliment holiday decor

by Nicole Miller

This year as a fundraiser, the Weiser High School Agriculture Department will be selling poinsettia flowers for the holiday season. The flowers have been cared for by the school’s two horticulture classes and will be sold Nov. 27 and 28 at the Matthew’s Farm Tree sale and later through the high school beginning Dec. 1.

The poinsettia was introduced from Mexico in 1828 by Dr. Joel Roberts Poinsett. The flower has a legend about its importance in the holiday season, saying that on a Christmas Eve, a Mexican girl was sad because she had no gift to present to the Christ Child at church services. According to the story, an angel heard her crying and said the most humble gift, given in love, would be acceptable in His eyes.

The girl then gathered roadside weeds and knelt to

pray as she placed them on the church’s altar. She looked up and was amazed to see her gathered weeds transformed into a bouquet of scarlet flowers. This legend developed the flower’s nickname as “flore de la noche buena,” or the flower of the holy night.

The legend and the vibrant red and green colors of poinsettias have made them a commonly seen component of annual holiday plant sales in the U.S.

The two horticulture classes at Weiser High School have been able to learn several new things based on the unique properties of poinsettias.

Students were required to research to plan for different elements of growing, including fertilizer, both type and strength. Students were asked to create a watering schedule and the necessary day and night temperatures for the proper growth of the

plants.

Students learned the flowers on poinsettias are the leaves that change colors and are referred to as bracts rather than petals. They also learned that temperature is a significant element which allows poinsettias to bloom or change color and that the plants do not respond well to water on the bracts, therefore must be watered near the roots.

Students have created sales flyers and care cards to be included with each plant sold. The care cards include general care information as well as interesting facts.

Students said they enjoyed the unit because it has been fun to see the bracts slowly change more each day as techniques they learned and researched were applied.

Brie Barbot said she was surprised to learn the poinsettia has become so popular during the

winter months in the northern climates despite their extreme sensitivity to cold temperatures.

Jade Hovey said although many people may consider poinsettias to be an annual flower, poinsettias can bloom year after year when well taken care of. Her grandmother has a four-year-old poinsettia that has continued to grow and bloom each year.

The classes will have four varieties of poinsettias to compliment as many holiday decorations as possible.

The “premium red” and the “prestige red” varieties are both available for the classic poinsettia aesthetic with their red bracts and green foliage. The “enduring pink” variety, recognizable by its magenta bracts and lighter green foliage, will be available as well as the “polar bear” white variety, recognizable by its white bracts that are often striated with

green along with a darker green foliage.

In addition to the poinsettias, the agriculture department and Weiser FFA students are also hosting the annual fruit sale from now until December 10. They are selling oranges, tangerines, grapefruits, potatoes, apples, and dried fruit as well as Christmas wreaths and pineapple turkey centerpieces. All proceeds from the fruit sale will be dedicated to various classroom and leadership activities for the Weiser FFA chapter.

The poinsettia plants are priced at \$8 each or two for \$15.

Plants can be purchased by calling Weiser High School at (208) 414-2595 or by emailing Patti Matthews at matthewsp@weiserschools.org or Robi Salisbury at salisbury@weiserschools.org. All proceeds will be dedicated to the Weiser High School Agriculture Department.

Santa will visit Weiser and is looking forward to letters

Letters to Santa may be dropped off at Santa’s mailbox

by Mary Phipps

The COVID-19 pandemic is limiting Santa’s appearances this year. Santa asks that everyone please keep in mind that restrictions are affecting his schedule but wants to wish everyone a merry Christmas.

Dec. 12, Santa will be giving out

candy at the Weiser High School alongside Weiser City police officers at the Christmas Cruze.

Dec. 19, Santa will be hosting a modified version of the Ho-Ho Express. Details of the modified version are still in the works and will be announced soon. Santa wishes to

keep everyone safe this Christmas.

Starting Nov. 30, look out for a Letters to Santa mailbox that will be placed at the front of the Weiser Signal American office, 18 E. Idaho St., for all who wish to send a letter. He will be reading letters sent to him every night.



Thank You

to everyone for sharing your favorite Christmas memory. Have a wonderful holiday season creating new memories and enjoying the special time with family and friends.

MTE’s giving tree helps out ROSE Advocates

Choose a tag from the Christmas tree and help make the season more joyous

by Mary Phipps

The holiday season fosters a spirit of giving that is reflected in movies, music and among community members. In the Weiser community there is the giving tree, a Christmas tree designed to spread kindness and gift giving to those in need.

“Every year, it’s different,” said MTE customer service employee Susan Samson. “I just like seeing the tags go, so you know people are being taken care of.”

The annual giving tree is organized by ROSE Advocates Inc. and can be found in the MTE Communications lobby. This will be MTE’s 15th year of participation with ROSE Advocates’ giving tree.

The tree is decorated first in a Christmas design, said Samson, then tags with items that are specifically asked for by individuals are placed throughout the tree. ROSE Advocates gathers information from different clients and client families that are in need. The information is placed on the tags and delivered to MTE to disperse throughout the tree.

“Our community is so wonderful,” said ROSE Advocates Executive Director Veronica Vasquez. “They just make sure that everyone in need is taken care of.”

Tags can include anyone from

children to adults. Each tag also has information regarding the person asking for the gift, such as age and a favorite color.

Individuals can come to MTE and choose a tag to shop for, then the gift is brought back to employees, wrapped or unwrapped. The gifts are then picked up by ROSE Advocates close to Christmas.

Some individuals and families have created a tradition for themselves out of the giving tree, selecting tags to shop for every year, said Samson.

“We bring our kids and have them pick out a tag so that they understand that there are people in need,” said Samson.

The tags are brought to MTE by ROSE Advocates around Thanksgiving time. This year, tags will be taken to MTE on Nov. 23.

Most tags are filled with necessities, such as pajamas or coats, some tags include toys that children have asked for.

At the end of the season, MTE usually takes a picture with all the gifts under the tree. Gifts are then delivered to ROSE Advocates sometime before Christmas to allot for time to then deliver to families. This year, the delivery date is Dec. 18.

All items that can be brought in are welcome, said Vasquez. A little can go a long way, and the



Susan Samson from Midvale Telephone Exchange adds a tag to the gift giving tree set up in the lobby of MTE Communications. ROSE Advocates provides the tags with the recipients wishes. Donors can choose a tag and purchase the items listed and return the gift wrapped or the staff at MTE will help with gift wrapping.

opportunity to bring a smile to someone’s face is a special moment.

“Christmas in general is just so special,” said Vasquez. “Knowing that we have this and

just going every year...it’s just about giving and making someone have a special day.”

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\$599

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