



In 1955, Jerry Forbes and his team at 1080 CHED organized the first Santas Anonymous campaign. In his radio messages, Jerry clearly outlined his vision for the charity; he wanted to make sure that each child in Edmonton had a new toy at Christmas. It was a simple concept that was eagerly embraced by the community. Over the years, 1080 CHED became 630 CHED and the city grew from 200,000 people to nearly a million, however the essence of their mission never changed. The mission of 630 CHED Santas Anonymous was inspired by a simple wish to see every child receive a new toy at Christmas. Throughout the years, the staff of 630 CHED and volunteers from our community have worked together to make this wish come true.

## 630 CHED SANTAS ANONYMOUS

### Maintaining Tradition with New Technology

Delivering approximately 25,000 gifts to 9,000 homes by 1200 drivers in just 2 days is a staggering achievement, but it's what the volunteers at CHED Santas Anonymous in Edmonton accomplish every Christmas holiday season. Started in 1955, 630 CHED Santas Anonymous, is devoted to bettering the lives of children in the City of Edmonton by delivering gifts to less fortunate children in the community the weekend before Christmas.

Each year, donated toys and gifts are collected in bins at shopping malls and department stores. Volunteers pick up the donations, and bring them to Santas Depot where they are wrapped and tagged for each family. On the weekend of delivery, drivers first register and then they are paired up with a dispatch volunteer who records the addresses of the homes that driver is taking gifts to. The process for coordinating, tracking, and collecting this extensive amount of information is all done manually.

### Delivering Greater Efficiency

Sierra Systems was working with the Christmas Bureau of Edmonton and Santas Anonymous on a database project, and when Sierra Systems reviewed Santas' delivery process – they saw an opportunity to help the charity optimize their operations. Bringing the festive theme of the holiday season to light, members of Sierra Systems initiated an internal contest among their peers to develop a mobile solution to support the delivery of Santas toys. The contest invited cross-disciplinary teams of developers, testers, business analysts, and system architects to develop an app which would help automate, and streamline the efficiency of the delivery process. Sierra Systems' employees across Canada took on the challenge bringing together their technical and business skills, and within months of the contest being announced, the team from Vancouver was selected for their application design based on its functionality and features.

## Launching into the Future

In 2013, the Santas Driver App was launched to speed up and streamline the delivery process. Now, volunteer drivers activate the iPhone and Android friendly App with a QR code. Before their departure, the delivery drivers register in the Santas Anonymous database with their cell phone, scan each delivery address barcode which then launches a map application to display the most efficient routing for delivery. As packages are delivered, the driver records the status of each delivered package. Files are automatically updated whenever a driver scans a barcode address, and uploads the delivery status. Subsequently, the information is deleted from the cell phones after 24 hours.

“When we were paper-based, we were efficient but this app has allowed us to become a well-oiled machine and has brought us into the 21st century,” said Joyce Powell, Office Manager, Santas Anonymous.

“Sierra Systems and their employees are great to work with”, adds Lana Nordlund, Executive Director, Santas Anonymous. “They took time out of their personal schedules to jump in and make some enhancements to get us up and running during our busiest time and we continue to work with Sierra Systems to keep pace with new mobile operating system releases”.

## Innovation and Creativity

Santas Driver App was awarded the Duncan Craig LLP Bronze Laurel Award which celebrates innovation and creativity of not-for-profit organizations. The organization has taken a step into the future while maintaining a tradition that started over half a century ago. Using the app has allowed the organization to deliver toys with efficiency, but the one thing it cannot do is deliver in an ice storm. However, the relentless commitment of the volunteers and the generosity of the Edmonton community make almost anything possible.

For more information, please visit [santasanonymous.ca](http://santasanonymous.ca).