



## News Release

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### **Citizens give to strangers**

*Arapahoe County's Adopt-a-Family program put presents under the tree*

**AURORA, CO** --- More than 200 families including seniors received gifts from strangers this holiday season through the Arapahoe County Adopt-a-Family program, which matches donors with local families in need during the holidays.

"Thanks to the generosity of Arapahoe County employees, local citizens, and community organizations and businesses, we were able to provide a very special holiday to an additional 50 families this year," said Stacia Schmied-Johnson, coordinator for the Adopt-a-Family program. "When I delivered gifts to a family who one of our departments adopted, the mom tried to fight back her tears of appreciation. It really demonstrated the impact of this program."

Gary Valliere invited his friends at Copper State Bolt and Nut and Pella Windows and Doors to adopt a young single mom with three kids. "When I first told my 9-year-old daughter that we were adopting a family, she was excited at the thought of getting two sisters and a brother," said Valliere. "Once I explained that we were going to help them have a great Christmas, she thought it was a wonderful idea. Even Santa came to deliver the gifts. Next year will be bigger and better."

The purpose of Adopt-a-Family is to do just that – adopt the entire family so that no one gets left out. The employees at Milgard Windows & Doors took that idea to heart. They adopted 22 families and raised money through employee raffles, jeans weeks and other events that was matched dollar for dollar by the company. "Our goal was to spoil these families," said Cherie Mulvey, buyer for Milgard. "We provided over \$16,000 in gift certificates as well as dozens of gifts. This program really put us in the Christmas spirit."

One family, adopted by staff at Old Chicago, was invited to a special Christmas Eve celebration, complete with gifts and a dinner where they could order whatever their hearts desired. "The dad was really touched and told me that they hadn't been able to hang out as a family in a really long time," said Sam Adams, an employee. "This program was an awesome way to give those in need a Christmas."

Any individuals, groups or organizations interested in participating in the 2007 Adopt-a-Family program can call Human Services at 303-636-1150 and leave their information to be contacted in November.

Caption: Employees at Milgard Windows & Doors raised more than \$16,000 to adopt 22 families and provide them with a very special holiday.

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