

Santa's Seniors help sew costumes



Leola Rammel (foreground) of Novi and Pauline Petricca of South Lyon tend to their costume-sewing assignments.

SANTA AND his elves paid a pre-season visit to Farmington Hills to say thanks to a group of senior adults helping Michigan's Thanksgiving Day Parade Committee.

The "thank you" was delivered Sept. 27 at the Farmington Hills Senior Center.

The group, referred to as "Santa's Seniors," joined the Friends of the Parade Association and has been helping make new costumes and props, repairing old costumes and assisting in other preparatory activities for the 60th annual Thanksgiving Day Parade in downtown Detroit.

"It takes an enormous amount of time and energy to produce the annual Thanksgiving parade," Santa said. "Without the help of our volunteers, especially groups like my seniors, we wouldn't be able to get the parade out on the street year after year."

The Santa Seniors program is a joint effort of the Farmington Hills Department of Special Services Senior Adult Program, the Area Agency on Aging 1-B, Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan and the Thanksgiving Day Parade Committee. It's intended to tap the expertise and knowledge of senior adults.

THE GROUP wanted to get involved with the volunteer committee not only for the pleasure the parade provides, but also to turn the spot-

light on how active many older adults really are.

"We are always looking for groups like Santa's Seniors," Santa said. "They're finishing up the work faster than we can get it to them."

One of Santa's Seniors is Stella Murphy. The 13-year Farmington Hills Senior Center almost every day since she retired from sales and supervision at J.L. Hudson Co. in 1975.

A volunteer worker who serves meals for the nutrition program and who leads groups on day and overnight trips, Murphy says her attendance is "almost like a homecoming every day."

"It's like a continuing family reunion."

AS A center regular, Murphy says she takes part in "all sorts of volunteer work. When this project was presented to us, I was more than happy to join in."

Santa's Seniors have worked on costumes two hours every Monday for two months. Murphy figures they have two or three weeks of work left.

What did she think of Santa's encouragement last week?

"It was quite an event," she said. "It seemed almost like Christmas in September."

Michigan's 1986 Thanksgiving Day Parade will head up Woodward Avenue Thursday morning, Nov. 27.



Eleanor Szabo (left) of Farmington Hills and Marjorie Imperati of Farmington, busy at work sewing parade costumes.

AT RIGHT: Wanda Diebold of Southfield lent a hand during Monday afternoon's costume-sewing session in the Farmington Hills Senior Center. The seniors helped to sew costumes for the 1986 Thanksgiving Day parade in downtown Detroit.



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Staff photos by Randy Borst

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