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Warmth and Joy this Holiday Season

Calgary, AB – Sometimes, Santa needs a little help so the team at Sutton Group Canwest pitches in to deliver warmth and joy to people in need. By mid-December, the office was overflowing with children's books, toys, new and used clothing, candy and grocery store gift certificates. Sutton Group Canwest 'adopted' two families including children with special needs and provided each family with $350 in food certificates along with individually-selected toys and clothes. They didn't stop there. The team donated 40 bags of gently-used apparel to two local charities: Women in Need and the Mustard Seed. Broker/Manager Helen Milton was thrilled to see everyone get into the holiday spirit. *(Pictured left: Shannon MacLeod, Pat West and Helen Milton)*

"Through a local school, we learned we could assist two families having a difficult year," says Helen. "One was a family of six and the other a family of five. We personally shopped for each person trying to find the toys they would like and clothing in the right size. Two of the children have special needs and don't read well, so we found some beautiful picture books for them."

Each family member received new and used clothing particularly warm winter sweaters, mittens and coats. Helen estimates that the office spent $350 on new clothing and toys plus $350 in grocery store gift certificates for each family. Raising approximately $1,400 for this annual charitable project began months earlier. Money was raised through a 50/50 draw at Monday morning meetings and a portion of a $2 per month donation from REALTORS®. Holiday giving is an office tradition that spans more than 25 years.

"It was wonderful to see that many REALTORS® also made additional contributions," says Helen. "Some offered cash, some went shopping for the team and others volunteered to deliver the gift baskets and bags of clothing. We have some top producers who don't have time to shop, so they gave $100 or more for food, clothing and toys. A few of our REALTORS® had clients who wanted to participate in the project; one of Donna Williams' clients donated $200 in gift certificates! It was just amazing what we put together!"

"We needed two trucks for deliveries because there wasn't enough room in one," she recalls with a laugh. "When the volunteers returned from delivering the gifts, I could tell they had been crying. It's rewarding to know that we made a difference, especially for the children."

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