

# Fun-filled day of festivities all over L.S.

BY PAM STEVENS | MANAGING EDITOR



Photos By Pam Stevens

**Top Left:** Local kids talk to Santa about their Christmas wishes. **Right:** Lake Stevens Fire Marshal Robert Marshall works for tips at Ixtapa. **Bottom Left:** LSSD children sing to Dickens Fair attendees.



Santa Claus came to town along with a lot of Christmas spirit and unique shopping in a day filled with all kinds of activities that helped to get Lake Stevens ready for a great holiday season.

Saturday, Dec. 3 started with the 25th annual Dickens Fair which is put on every year by the Lake Stevens School District and is held at Cavelero Mid High School.

Students from all over the district shared their musical talents on the stage while shoppers enjoyed over 100 unique "shops" that offered everything from animal wear to handmade jewelry and scarves to homemade fudge and other goodies.

Consumers got a great start to their holiday shopping at this year's event and donated \$1,239 and over 100 crates of food for the Lake Stevens Food Bank.

Folks made their way downtown that evening to enjoy the annual Christmas tree lighting sponsored by the Lake Stevens Kiwanis Club.

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Kids from ages one to 93 enjoyed hot chocolate and cookies from Boy Scout Troop 41 and also got to color some festive holiday pictures while waiting for the Man in Red to show up. The excitement climaxed when folks heard the sound of a Lake Stevens fire truck making its way down Main Street with Santa inside.

Soon everyone was singing Christmas carols and Santa was jumping from the big, red truck to a crowd of cheers.

Kids lined up to sit on Santa's lap to ensure that he knows exactly what is on their Christmas list.

Many then headed to Ixtapa Mexican Restaurant to enjoy a hot meal served by Lake Steven Firefighters.

For the last eight years local firefighters have been working for tips at Ixtapa. The money that is raised goes to help give local kids in need a Christmas they may not have otherwise.

"This is something we can do for the community," Ixtapa owner Eddie Barajas said. "The firefighters came to us eight years ago and asked if we could help them out with the children who don't have a Christmas. Of course we said yes and we love doing this."

Firefighter Pat Cook initiated Tips for

Firefighters almost a decade ago. After growing up in what he calls "the projects of Everett" and very poor he knows what it is like not having toys under the tree on Christmas Day. His goal was to make sure that kids in our community enjoy the excitement of Christmas.

"We didn't always get the Christmas we wanted," Cook said. "When we actually got toys it was the greatest Christmas."

The firefighters collected over \$2,500 in tips plus \$400 in gifts this year and will be able to help out 30 local kids. They do all of the shopping themselves, spending \$75 per child on gifts and then purchasing each child a \$25 gift card. Each year Lake Stevens Target covers the tax making the money go even further.

"Lake Stevens is such a great community. They come out and support us and the kids every year," Cook said.

By helping parents provide Christmas for their kids they are helping families in need hang on a little longer.

"All we're doing is helping them a month longer paying their mortgages and paying their bills," Cook said. "There are a lot of desperate families out there who could really use the help."

If you were unable to attend Tips for Firefighters you can still help by contacting the Lake Stevens Family Center at 425-397-7433.