



News Release

Contact:
Jason Parent
Development and
College Relations Office
33 Edgemont Drive
Presque Isle, ME 04769
Phone: (207) 768-2808
Fax: (207) 768-2813
jparent@nmcc.edu

November 28, 2008
NR08111

NMCC to brighten and enlighten holiday season by giving away more than 500 books at PI Holiday Light Parade; College invites community to donate new or used books for giveaway

Aroostook County - As County organizations participating in this year's Presque Isle Holiday Light Parade on December 6 collect food and gifts for the needy from parade goers, and yet others hand out candy and other treats to children lining the route, students and employees at Northern Maine Community College will take a different twist on the event's spirit of giving.

Acting in the capacity of Santa's literary elves, the NMCC volunteers plan to hand out more than 500 books to kids of all ages enjoying the parade. The free book distribution will mark the fifth year the Presque Isle College has undertaken the unique project.

The initiative, led by instructor Colleen Harmon, evolved both as an idea to give-away something that had a connection to the nature of the College and what it offers the community, as well as providing area children with something from which they would benefit.

"Everyone should be able to read and everyone should be able to have books without worrying about it taking away from paying for fuel to heat the home or food for the table. With the current state of the economy, this is especially true," said Harmon. "Sharing a book is like sharing an adventure, and we wanted to make certain all children had the opportunity to enjoy an adventure."

Toward that end, Harmon and volunteers have been working for weeks in advance of the parade to collect donated books (new and used) from various groups and individuals.

"Books are expensive and the price is going up. Once a child or adult reads a book it often sits around on a shelf or is stored away. Our goal was to dust those books off and put them to good use in the hands of a different reader," said Harmon.

Boxes full of books will fill the back of the NMCC emergency medical services training vehicle, which will serve as the "book mobile" for the parade. Several College students and employees will take the books and hand them out to children along the route.

The “book mobile” will be accompanied by NMCC’s parade float entry, which this year, will be themed “NMCC: Santa’s Workshop - Future Elves in Training” to reflect the entrepreneurial programs offered at the College and the important role NMCC plays in educating the County’s workforce. Students in NMCC’s residential construction program have constructed a small workshop that will serve as a Santa’s Workshop backdrop. Children of College students and employees will join their parents on the float and in handing out books along the route.

Student Shannon Smart of New Sweden who has participated in the NMCC parade book distribution in the past will again this year. Smart has taken the lead on preparing NMCC’s float for this year’s parade, working collaboratively with the NMCC Student Senate and staff in the development and college relations office.

“I think everyone looks forward to it now,” said Smart. “I really enjoyed taking part in the parade last year. Although it is usually a very cold night, all of us who participate are left with a very warm feeling inside as we see the joy on the children’s faces along the parade route.”

Individuals or organizations with children’s books to donate to NMCC to be given out during the 2008 Holiday Light Parade should contact the development and college relations office at 768-2809 or drop off books at the information window in the main lobby of the Christie building at the College.

#####



Northern Maine Community College Early Childhood Education Instructor Heidi Broad-Smith gives a book to a child attending the Presque Isle Holiday Light Parade last year. NMCC students and employees plan to hand out over 500 books during this year’s parade on December 6 in downtown Presque Isle.