Gallup campus ho-ho-hosts Santa Claus, holiday joy

The community turned out in full holly jolly holiday force Dec. 6 for the annual Holiday in New Mexico event at the University of New Mexico-Gallup campus. It was a night of posole, bischochitos, activities, caroling, luminaries and of course, Santa Claus.

After various educational departments filled decorated bags with sand and lights, more than 200 luminarias glowed along the sidewalks of the UNM-G campus, 705 Gurley Ave. Huge Christmas wreaths hung at the entrance of Gurley Hall, and the smell of traditional posole filled the air.

Each year, the campus adds more to its agenda for this free holiday event.

This year, UNM students entertained the crowd with Christmas carols, and lines of attendees formed inside Gurley Hall, where various activities took place. There were gingerbread- and bookmarker-making activities, and excited children waited in line to see Santa Claus, who was also full of holiday joy.

“This is such a great event, and it’s not only exciting for me, but you can see it on the boys’ and girls’ faces,” Santa said. “I even got to taste the posole and it was yummy.”

Free books were given to children to encourage reading, and UNM-G Library Information Specialist Yolanda Chavez and Public Services Librarian Jim Fisk helped kids create UNM book markers.

“We want to keep children encouraged by having them make their own bookmarkers and giving them a free book, so they can use [them] and have fun at reading,” Chavez said.

Art students displayed their works at an arts and crafts sale, and families flocked from one event to another, checking out the crafts, artwork and goodies.

A candy cane reindeer project hosted by SkillsUSA Advisor Ann Jarvis and UNM-G student Lillian Gaines was a hit with the kids.

“We like to pitch in with activities and just have a lot of fun,” Jarvis said. “Our group helped out with the luminarias, and we filled out 125 bags for display.”

In a seperate room, cartoons were screened with free popcorn for families who needed a short breather from the activities and holiday excitement.

Parent Wilson Sanchez said the yearly event is so well done, his family anticipates it annually — his kids look forward to seeing Santa and engaging in the crafts.

“Each year, it just seems to get better, and even though it was chilly outside, it was well worth coming out for it,” Sanchez said. “I know my kids enjoy it and can’t wait to take a picture with Santa Claus.”

For more information about UNM-G events, visit: www.gallup.unm.edu or call (505) 863-7500

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