

CCCS a constant stroll participant

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Since the Christmas Stroll began 17 years ago, one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the community event has been Community Counseling and Correctional Services.

"We've been with the Stoll since its inception," said Mike Thatcher, head of CCCS, located in Uptown Butte. "We volunteer our time and love it. It's our chance to act like little kids."

Part of that fun is buying lots of toys for Butte's boys and girls, from basketballs to grand prize giveaways of bicycles, dolls and more. The business picks up the entire tab for the event it stages at 111 W. Broadway.

Fun begins at around 6 pm.m and goes until CCCS has given out all its toys and prizes; grand prizes are drawn the next day and winners notified.

"We try to do anything we can to make it a wonderful evening for families," Thatcher added. Part of making the night special for kids and their families includes horseback rides, games, face-painting and free goodies, from cookies to cocoa and coffee and pop.

There are also free pictures with Santa and letters to Santa can be written as well.

CCCS residents, along with staff and board members, all help out, said Ann Watson, executive assistant at CCCS. "They really enjoy doing this," she said of the event which requires set up and clean up, as well as staging events for the hundreds of people that come to the agency.

"This is a small gesture on our part as an active member of the community," said Thatcher, who helps shop for the toys taken home by Butte's children. "This is my favorite event and it is for many of the staff and board members."

The collaborative effort involves bringing horses to the Uptown where kids can get a ride under a covered garage.

The kitchen staff at CCCS stays busy too, baking up some 3,000 cookies for the big night.

One of the more original contests CCCS sponsors is the basketball toss where two baskets are set up -- one for small children and another adult-

sized basket -- and those who sink a basket get to keep a basketball. The event continues until the basketballs stash is depleted.

"We're just hoping the weather stays warm (that evening)," Watson added.