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Santa in training

For the Record

Santa Claus, also known as Ed Nichols, is a regular visitor to Rolling Ridge, sometimes even showing up in July. This year, his visit was extra special thanks to a special helper. His grandson, McCray Peterson, accompanied him to the DePaul Senior Living Community in Newton Grove.

Dressed in the traditional Santa outfit, Nichols and McCray filled the halls with the sound of jingle bells and good cheer, posing for photos with residents who all thought McCray was the most precious Santa they had ever seen.

"We had a good time," said Nichols. "McCray made my job easier. All the residents wanted hugs from him."

When he's not playing the part at Rolling Ridge, Nichols works as Santa at the local Cabela's store. He's been helping out Old Saint Nick for seven seasons now.

"When you see a kid running down the runway and just leap up and give you a hug, that's all you need," he said. "There's nothing like it."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Santa's helper, McCray Peterson, visits with Rolling Ridge resident Louise Naylor in the top left photo. Santa and his helper also visits with residents Terry Jones, right photo, and Brenda Sullivan, bottom left photo.