



In the eyes of children
We see the joy of Christmas
In the hearts of children
We see the true meaning of Christmas



Sponsored by
NORPAC SANTAS
September 24th, 25th and 26th, 2026
Best Western Plus Mountain View
Auburn, WA

**Thank you for attending the
2026 Northwest Santa Conference!**

Remember that the real Santa is among us, and we are all his helpers.

We hope you enjoy this learning time together!

The 2026 Northwest Santa Conference is a practical, friendly gathering for Santa and Mrs. Claus performers who want to sharpen their craft, compare notes with peers, and head into the season with useful ideas. Over two full days, the program brings together hands-on workshops, experienced presenters, professional-photo opportunities, shared meals, and the kind of conversation that rarely fits into a quick online exchange.

Whether you are preparing for your first busy season, refining a well-established character, or returning after some time away, you will find sessions built around the real work of Christmas performing. We will talk through home visits, communicating more thoughtfully, handling the unexpected, finding work, working with photographers, sharing props, and helping children have more successful Santa visits. There will also be time to enjoy one another's company, including Thursday hospitality and a Friday-night fireside sing-along.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Hotel Conference Room

Registration

Pick up your program, auction numbers and gift bag

Hospitality Hour

Mrs. Claus Circle

Join us for light refreshments and friendly conversation.

Coffee, tea, water, cookies and sundries provided throughout the day by the Mrs. Claus Circle

Christmas isn't just a day. It's a frame of mind.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FRIDAY

8:00 - 9:00 AM

Hotel Conference Room

Conference Room Opens

Light snacks will be available in the conference room. Breakfast for Hotel Guests from 5:30 to 9:00 AM

Registration

Pick up your program, auction numbers and gift bag.

8:30 - 9:00 AM

Opening Welcome and Orientation

Gene Sanders

Welcome, announcements, introduction of first-time attendees, Santa Oath, and Mrs. Claus Oath

Morning sessions begin promptly at 9:00 AM

9:00 - 10:15 AM

Planning a Home Visit

Jerry Nebel

Jerry Nebel will lead a practical session on planning a successful Santa home visit from start to finish. He will discuss how he prepares before a visit, including the questionnaire he sends to families, what information he asks them to provide, and how thoughtful follow-up afterward helps complete the experience.

10:15 - 10:30 AM

Break

10:30 AM - 11:45 AM

Basic Christmas ASL

Alisa Sutherland

Alisa Sutherland will lead an approachable introduction to basic Christmas ASL for Santa, Mrs. Claus, and Elf performers. Learn simple signs and expressions that can help make holiday visits more welcoming for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, families, and guests.

11:45 - 12:00 PM

Lunch Set Up

12:00 - 1:15 PM

Catered Lunch

Provided by WinCo Deli

Deli Wrap Variety

Afternoon sessions begin promptly at 1:15 PM

Coffee, tea, water, cookies and sundries provided throughout the day by the Mrs. Claus Circle

1:15 - 1:30 PM

1:30 - 2:30 PM

Lunch Clean Up

Improv

Jim Beidle

Holiday work often calls for more than a prepared script. **Jim Beidle** will lead a practical, hands-on introduction to storytelling and improv, with simple warm-ups and a collaborative table activity built around a shared prompt.

No public performance is required. Practice listening, building on an idea, and finding more confidence when a visit takes an unexpected turn.

2:30 - 2:45 PM

2:45 - 4:00 PM

Break

Working with a Photographer

Kristin Elliott-Parker

Retail Santa photos and photographer-led family sessions are not the same job. **Kristin Elliott-Parker** will explore how Santa, Mrs. Claus, and Elf performers can work within a photographer's plan, help families feel at ease, and create natural moments that lead to stronger family portraits.

4:00 - 5:30 PM

Photography: Headshots

Kristin Elliott-Parker

Kristin Elliott-Parker will offer three professional photos for \$20 during the conference. Bring the look you want represented in your Santa, Mrs. Claus, or Elf marketing materials. A backdrop and changing tent will be available on-site, with sign-up at the conference check-in table.

5:30 - 5:45 PM

6:00 - 7:30 PM

Group Photo in Santa Attire

Catered Dinner

Branks BBQ

A full Barbecue Dinner

8:00 - 9:00 PM

Christmas Sing-Along Party by the fire pit

Hosted by Gene Sanders & the Mrs. Claus Circle

Coffee, tea, water, cookies and sundries provided throughout the day by the Mrs. Claus Circle

Christmas isn't just a day. It's a frame of mind.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Saturday

8:00 – 8:30 AM

Hotel Conference Room

Conference Room Opens

Light snacks will be available in the conference room. Breakfast for Hotel Guests from 5:30 to 9:00 AM

8:30 - 9:00 AM

Opening Welcome and Orientation

Gene Sanders

Day-two announcements and conference updates

Morning sessions begin promptly at 9:00 AM

9:00 - 10:15 AM

Helping Children Succeed at Santa Visits.

JuJu Acolla

Children do not all meet Santa in the same way. **JuJu Acolla** will lead a practical session on helping performers respond with patience, flexibility, and useful options when a child needs extra time, a different approach, or more space to feel comfortable.

10:15 - 10:40 AM

Break

Check out of the hotel.

10:40 AM -11:50 AM

Sharing Your Props

Jim & Debbie Zeller

A favorite prop, a small routine, or a simple idea can become part of a memorable holiday visit. **Jim and Debbie Zeller** will lead a participatory session where performers can share inspiration, see how others use props, and gather fresh ideas for their own work.

11:50 - 12:00 PM

Lunch Set Up

12:00 - 1:15 PM

Catered Lunch

Provided by QDOBA Mexican Eats

Mexican-style Hot Bar

Afternoon sessions begin promptly at 1:15 PM

1:15 -1:30 PM

Lunch Clean Up

Coffee, tea, water, cookies and sundries provided throughout the day by the Mrs. Claus Circle

1:30 - 2:30 PM

History of Santa

Pamela McColl

Historian and author **Pamela McColl** will explore the 200-year history of *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* and its role in shaping America's Santa Claus. The session will look at how Clement Clarke Moore's poem transformed the St. Nicholas legend into the "right jolly old elf," how illustrators shaped Santa's appearance through more than 2,000 editions, and how Mrs. Claus entered American Christmas lore in 1849.

2:30 - 2:45 PM

Break

2:45 – 4:00 PM

Finding Santa Work Through GigSalad

Gene Sanders

GigSalad is an online marketplace where performers can connect with people looking for holiday entertainment and event talent. **Gene Sanders** will offer a practical introduction to using the platform, responding to inquiries, and deciding whether it fits your own approach to finding Santa work.

4:00 - 5:00 PM

Closing Activities

Gene Sanders

Conference Certificate Presentation

Ornament Exchange

Auction Results

50/50 Raffle Drawing

Closing Comments

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Special Thanks
to the following people for organizing
and contributing to this event

Presenters

Alisa Sutherland
Gene Sanders
Jerry Nebel
Jim & Debbie Zeller
Jim Beidle
JuJu Acolla
Kristin Elliott-Parker
Pamela McColl

NORPAC Board & Planning Committee

Gene Sanders, Chair
Bob Partlow, Vice Chair
Jim & Debbie Zeller, Treasurers
Jim Beidle, Secretary
Wayne Beresford, Member-at-large
Jen Schneider, Conference Committee
Steve Connors, Conference Committee
Glena Gorley, Conference Committee

Hospitality

Mrs. Claus Community Members

Venue Coordination

The Best Western Mountain View Auburn

Catering

Friday Lunch – WinCo Deli
Friday Dinner – Branks BBQ
Saturday Lunch – QDOBA Mexican Eats

Audio Visual

Jim Beidle

Facilities

The Best Western Mountain View Auburn

Our sincere thanks to everyone who attended the 2026 Northwest Santa Conference. Thanks also to those who contributed items for the silent auction, who supported the 50/50 raffle, and who helped behind the scenes. We appreciate everyone's contributions, large or small, and we wish each of you a Merry Christmas and a wonderful 2026 Santa Season!

~~The Planning Committee

Coffee, tea, water, cookies and sundries provided throughout the day by the Mrs. Claus Circle