



Santa from Santa's Village

Phillip L. Wenz

Santa Claus Productions

www.SantafromSantasVillage.com

www.SantaClausOath.com

www.SantaClausHallofFame.com



Personal Information

Born - December 10, 1962; Havana, Illinois

Education – Watseka Community High School; Watseka, Illinois
North Central College; Naperville, Illinois

Santa's Career Profile Overview

Appeared in over 35 parades, including nationally televised parades in Chicago, IL and Houston, TX.

Emceed the Tree Lighting Ceremonies in Chicago, IL and Houston, TX.

Has appeared in character on numerous TV shows, billboards, commercials, and magazine covers.

The year round Santa Claus at Santa's Village theme park in Dundee, IL. Associated with Santa's Village for over 25 years and is the longest tenured Santa in the park's history.

Appearances at some of the largest department stores and shopping malls in Chicagoland.

A guest at some of the nation's top corporate holiday events and parties.

Given the title of "Chicago's Very Own" by WGN-TV.

Awarded and received the 1994 Brass Ring Award for Best Theme Park Commercial by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA).

Received the "Hats Off 2 Houston" Award from KPRC-TV in Houston.

Consultant to St. Nicholas Development, L.L.C., historic Santa's Candy Castle and Santa Claus Town restoration project in Santa Claus, IN.

Published author of "Santa's Village" by Arcadia's Image of America series.

Recognized historian and authority on Santa Claus history, traditions, and folklore.

Author of the Santa Claus Oath that is universally accepted by Santa portrayers around the world.

Keynote speaker at the 2009 Worldwide Santa Claus convention in Gatlinburg, TN.

Selected as a Charter Member of the Santa Claus Hall of Fame in Santa Claus, IN and is the Hall's first living member.

Received the 2012 "Spirit of St. Nicholas" award from the St. Nicholas Institute in Detroit, MI.

Endorsements and Reviews

"Phil Wenz is Santa Claus and one of Chicago's Very Own."

WGN-TV Channel Nine, Chicago, IL

"No one can pull off the Santa Act better."

Chicago Tribune, Chicago, IL

"The Master Santa!"

Daily Herald, Arlington Heights, IL

"We got tons of compliments. They just loved him."

Terri Kaminski, Brach's Holiday Parade, Chicago, IL

"Phil Wenz is the most authentic Santa in the Chicago area."

The News Sun, Waukegan, IL

"Don't tell the kids, but we've got the real Santa for our parade, Phillip Wenz of Chicago."

Houston Chronicle, Houston, TX

"We are proud to have you as our Santa for our parade."

Virginia Carlton Ballard, Bank United Thanksgiving Day Parade, Houston, TX

"Wenz has turned Santa into his life's work."

Naperville Sun, Naperville, IL

"The official Santa to the City of Houston."

Susan Christensen, City of Houston Tree Lighting

"You really must be Santa Claus."

Debby Winans, Chicago Christmas Parade Association

"This Santa is the real thing."

Niles Spectator, Niles, IL

"As far as we are concerned, he IS Santa."

Golfmill Shopping Center Association, Niles, IL

"He's as close to Santa as you can get."

Ron Zaccard, Springhill Mall, Dundee, IL

"The nation's foremost practitioner and student of the Claus arts."

Eric Zorn, Tribune Media Service, Chicago, IL

"A man who needs only one introduction. Santa Claus."

Jim Shean, Chicago's Mayor's Office of Special Events

"The most unique Santa you will ever meet!"

WGN Radio, Chicago, IL

"The Midwest's most famous Kris Kringle!"

Time Out Chicago Magazine, Chicago, IL

(Quotes are used with written permission from the persons, companies, and organizations.)

A partial listing of organizations that have used Santa Phillip L. Wenz over the past 35 years...

American Business Women Association - Houston, Texas
American Cancer Center - Chicago, Illinois
Baker and McKenzie - Chicago, Illinois
Bank United Thanksgiving Day Parade - Houston, Texas
Brach's Holiday Parade - Chicago, Illinois
Carson Pirie Scott & Company State Street - Chicago, Illinois
Chicago Hyatt Hotel - Chicago, Illinois
Chicago Marriott Hotel - Chicago, Illinois
Chicago Sheraton Hotel - Chicago, Illinois
Children's Memorial Hospital - Chicago, Illinois
City of Chicago Tree Lighting - Chicago, Illinois
City of Houston Tree Lighting - Houston, Texas
Clorox Company - Oakland, California
Coca-Cola Museum - Decatur, Illinois
Drake Hotel - Chicago, Illinois
Ford Motor Corporation - Detroit, Michigan
Four Seasons Hotel - Houston, Texas
Gibson City Lighted Parade - Gibson City, Illinois
Golf Mill Center - Niles, Illinois
Grand Bear Lodge - Utica, Illinois
Grey Star Management - Houston, Texas
Houston Downtown Holly Trolley Festival - Houston, Texas
KHOU-TV - Houston, Texas
KKBQ-Radio - Houston, Texas
Ketchum Public Relations - Washington, DC
Lakeshore Public Television - Merrillville, Indiana
Magnificent Mile Lights Festival - Chicago, Illinois
McDonald's Corporation - Oak Brook, Illinois
Neiman Marcus - Dallas, Texas
Operation North Pole - Des Plaines, Illinois
P.A. Bergner's Department Store - Aurora, Illinois
Prudential Building - Chicago, Illinois
Rantoul Business Association - Rantoul, Illinois
Resurrection Hospital - Chicago, Illinois
Roman Incorporated - Roselle, Illinois
SMC Photo Promotions - Deerfield, Illinois
Santa Claus Christmas Festival - Santa Claus, Indiana
Santa Claus Train - IL Central Railroad
Santa's Candy Castle - Santa Claus, Indiana
Santa's Village - Dundee, Illinois
Sears on State - Chicago, Illinois
Springhill Shopping Center - Dundee, Illinois
Target Stores - Chicago, Illinois
Texas Children's Hospital - Houston, Texas
Toys for Tots - USMC Reserves
The Americas Club - Chicago, Illinois
United Airlines - Chicago, Illinois
Univision-TV - Los Angeles, California
WCIA-TV - Champaign, Illinois
WLS-TV - Chicago, Illinois
WGN-TV - Chicago, Illinois
Watseka Area Chamber of Commerce - Watseka, Illinois
Wilson Sporting Goods - Chicago, Illinois
Wilton Partners - Los Angeles, California

Santa's Village – Dundee, Illinois

Associated with Santa's Village theme park in Dundee, IL for over 25 years, Phillip L. Wenz has become one of the very few year round professional Santa Clauses in the world, appearing at the park and at special events over 200 days a year. With Santa's Village, Phillip appears in commercials, on billboards, in brochures, on television and radio. Just as his predecessors, being the Santa from Santa's Village is a full time job.

Most of Santa's time is spent in Santa's House. For over 50 years Santa's House has been home to jolly old St. Nick! This storybook cottage has been host to hundreds of thousands of children that spend that magical moment with Santa Claus. Filled with antiques, set near the center of the park, the house is a nostalgic example of old-time Christmas spirit and hospitality.

When venturing up to Santa's House, one can see and touch the frozen North Pole right outside the front door. The "Pole" stays icy even on the hottest summer days. At the front door a giant key unlocks the secrets of the home to visitors. Inside you can see Santa's sleigh loaded with Christmas goodies, a beautiful tree that stays up all year long and the huge cobblestone fireplace that warms the home on those "cold winter nights". Children can sit at Santa's desk and sign his Good Book. Twinkle lights, decorations, and wrapped packages adorn the rafters.

Imagine the look on a child's face when he or she comes into this house of real make-believe! Santa talks and visits with everyone just as he has since the "Village" opened in 1959. Santa's House is the home of all that makes childhood fantasy a magical memory for children of all ages.

Besides being the park's Santa Claus, Wenz is Santa's Village's official historian. He also works with the community relations and advertising aspects of the park with the Santa role as a spokesperson. In 1994 he won the IAAPA Brass Ring Award given by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions for creating the best theme park commercial; "Kids Just Wanna Have Fun!"

Santa Claus, Indiana

As a consultant for St. Nicholas Development, LLC, Phillip L. Wenz was asked to work on the historical documentation of Santa's Candy Castle and Santa Claus Town. The Castle, the nation's first themed attraction and the first attraction in Santa Claus, Indiana's famed history, re-opened its magical doors in the summer of 2006. The historic Santa Claus Town restoration project is on-going.

Along with his consulting with St. Nicholas Development, LLC, Wenz also makes appearances for the Candy Castle for television, print, and promotions. He also acts as an advisor to the Santas who work at the various attractions in Santa Claus such as Holiday World theme park, Santa Claus Christmas Store, and Santa's Lodge. Wenz has also developed projects for the community such as workshops for Santas and designs historical displays.

He is the creator and producer of the annual Jim Yellig Santa Claus Workshop. The Workshop attracts hundreds of Santas from across the globe to Santa Claus each April. It is one of the largest gatherings of its kind in the world.

Parades

Phillip L. Wenz's first parade was in November of 1977 for the annual Watseka (IL) Area Chamber of Commerce Christmas Parade. He was only 14 at the time. Wenz would appear in eight straight Watseka parades until the 1984 Christmas season. He did return to do a ninth parade in 2001 as part of his 20 year high school class reunion and a tenth parade in 2012 – the 35th anniversary of his first parade. Over the course of the last four decades, Wenz has appeared in over 35 parades including nationally televised parades in Chicago, IL and Houston, TX.

His roster of parades includes Chicago's Brach's Holiday Parade (6), Houston's Bank United Thanksgiving Day Parade (3), Chicago's Magnificent Mile Lights Festival Parade (3), Watseka, IL Christmas Parade (10), Rolling Meadows, IL Christmas Parade (2), Arlington Heights, IL Christmas Parade (1), Dundee, IL Dickens in Dundee Christmas Parade (3), Cissna Park IL, Christmas Parade (1), Rantoul, IL Christmas Parade (1), Gibson City's Illinois Lighted Holiday Parade (7), and Operation North Pole Parade in Des Plaines, IL (1).

Television, Radio, and Podcasts

From news stories on his career to being the spokesperson for an event or just being Santa, Phillip L. Wenz has made numerous television appearances. Wenz has appeared on Chicago, IL area programs like Good Day Chicago on WFLD-TV (FOX 32), Chicagoining with Bill Campbell on WLS-TV (ABC 7), The Bozo Show on Super Station WGN-TV, and Christmas in Chicago on Chicagoland TV. His career has been featured on prime news broadcast such as "Chicago's Very Own" on WGN-TV's Nine o'clock News and on ABC 7's News at 11 AM. As Santa, Wenz has made appearances on nearly every Chicago television magazine program and metropolitan news broadcasts. He also has appeared as a spokesperson on numerous programs for Santa's Village, Brach's Candy, and Chicago's Office of Special Events.

Chicago is not the only television market that has seen Wenz as Santa. He has been a guest host on "Fox Kids Club" on WQRF-TV (FOX 39) in Rockford, IL, an annual Christmas Eve visitor to The Morning Show and C-I Living TV both with WCIA-TV (CBS 3) in Champaign, IL, and promoting the "Santa Claus Christmas Festival" in Santa Claus, Indiana for WFIE-TV (NBC 14) Evansville, Indiana. In Houston, TX, Wenz has been featured on "Hats off to Houston" on KPRC-TV (NBC 2) and Houston's Holly Trolley Festival for Silver King Broadcasting. As Santa he acted as spokesperson for Houston's Bank United Thanksgiving Day Parade, appearing at each major television station in the city to officially invite the citizens of Houston to the parade.

His national television appearances include broadcasts originating from Chicago such as "Brach's Holiday Parade" (WGN-TV, ABC-TV and CBS-TV), "The Magnificent Mile Lights Festival" (WGN-TV and ABC-TV), "Lights, Camera, Christmas!" (Home Shopping Network) and "Chicago Tree Lighting Ceremony" (PBS-TV); Houston's nationally syndicated broadcast of the "Bank United Thanksgiving Day Parade" (CBS-TV); "Feliz Navidad" with Univision of Los Angeles, CA and "Christmas in Santa Claus" filmed in Santa Claus, IN for the Travel Channel.

Television is not the only electronic media that Santa has appeared on. Chicago radio programs like WGN's "Bob Collins Show", "The Spike O'Dell Show", "The Nick Digilio Show", WLS Talk Radio "Don Wade and Roma", and WBBM News Radio have had Wenz as a guest. Houston's KKBQ Radio's "Davy Crocket and Pam Ivy's Country Today" have had him on their Christmas program. Even Wenz's 2010 Santa Claus Hall of Fame induction was featured on "Happenings Magazine" on WLIP-AM Kenosha, WI. Even smaller stations such as WCFF in Champaign, IL, WGFA Radio in Watseka, IL, and WGCY Radio in Gibson City, IL have had Santa as a feature.

With Santa's voice, Phillip L. Wenz has done many radio commercial spots and voice-overs during his career. His voice-over commercial credits include Santa's Village, Brach's Candy, 900 North, Bank United, Brunswick Recreation Centers, and K-Mart. Wenz has also voiced the character of Kris Kringle on WLIT-FM Chicago for their Christmas Eve radio performance of "Miracle on 34th Street" and the voice of Santa Claus for BBC Radio in London, England for a history on the community of Santa Claus, Indiana.

With the new medium of internet Podcasts, Wenz has been heard on many worldwide broadcasts. These shows include "Conversations with Mrs. Claus" from Melbourne, Australia and the Merry Christmas Network from Sandy, Utah. He also is a contributor to many of the on-line streaming Christmas radio broadcasts.

Advertising, Promotions, and Print Work

From shooting commercials for Brach's Candy to promoting a food collection at Golf Mill Shopping Center in Niles, IL or appearing in an entire advertisement campaign for Santa's Village, Phillip L. Wenz has helped get the message out to the public market. His credentials include 26 commercials for such clients as Santa's Village, Polar Dome Ice Arena, Bank United, Sears, K-Mart, and Brach's Candy. Promotional, internet, and print ads for Grand Bear Lodge in Utica, IL, Wilton Partners of Los Angeles, CA, and even the State of Illinois "IPASS" program.

As Santa, Phillip L. Wenz has appeared on billboards, in brochures, on post cards, and done numerous stock photos for the print medium for industry photo shoots and advertisements. He has also graced the covers of regional magazine and specialized Christmas cards. His portfolio includes Santa's Village, McDonalds, Chicago Transit Authority, and Pizza Hut. A complete portfolio of print work is available with work from many photographic studios including ad agencies in Chicago IL, Houston TX, and Champaign IL.

Special Santa Programs

Santa's Children's Church - What better way to help children understand the "true meaning" of the Season than to have Santa Claus himself tell the Christmas story! Young and old will marvel at Santa's message! Children are asked to gather at the altar to participate in this unique and emotional presentation. Santa's Children's Church has been written with the help of the United Methodist Church and the Roman Catholic Church. After the service, Santa is available for visiting one on one with all the parishioners.

Storytime with Santa - The importance of reading and using the imagination is the central message of Storytime with Santa. Children, parents and grandparents are encouraged to take a trip to the "imagination" with Santa. The program is educational in teaching children of all cultures the traditions of Christmas from reading Holiday poems, stories and singing Christmas Carols.

Letters from Santa Program - Every Christmas, thousands of children write Santa Claus a letter to inform the Jolly Old Elf what they would like for Christmas. What better way to increase a child's belief in Santa than to have a letter returned to them by Santa Claus from his office in Santa Claus, Indiana. Information on this program is available for clubs, churches, organizations, fund raisers and community post offices.

Children's Special Visits - Sometimes a child has a special need and cannot visit Santa in a regular setting. Santa is happy to visit hospitals, foundations and facilities to make sure that all children can experience a visit from St. Nick at Christmas or anytime of the year. Home visits available for special need children.

Don't forget the "Big Kids" - Why should all the little ones have all the fun? Santa never forgets the children of yesteryear. Imagine the surprise on a senior's face when they come face to face with Santa Claus once again. Santa's appearance at a residence home, convalescent center or gated community is not only special for the resident, but their family also.

Speaking Programs

Unique programs presented by Phillip L. Wenz that will entertain and provide information about some of the magic of being a professional Santa Claus. Programs can be presented as a single presentation to a group or association, or structured to fit into a multi-program event.

History and Memories of Santa's Village - Enjoy memories, rare historic photographs and uncommon memorabilia with the Santa from Santa's Village himself, Phillip L. Wenz. A great business meeting or luncheon program, "History and Memories of Santa's Village" brings a behind the scenes look at the East Dundee, Illinois theme park and what the future of Santa's Village may be.

Planning a Christmas Parade - An information and structural look at planning a successful Christmas Parade in any size community. Phillip L. Wenz has appeared in over 35 parades in some of the nation's largest cities and in regional and local communities. Wenz has also been involved in the planning, marketing, sponsorship development, and volunteer recruitment of many of these parades. His unique perspective comes from an insider's point of view. A great program for merchant associations, a chamber of commerce or civic organizations.

Growing Up Santa - Relating his experiences as the boy who grew up to be Santa Claus, Phillip L. Wenz chronicles some of the opportunities that he has experienced as a true year-round Santa Claus. From his first stint as Santa as a four year old to his parades, corporate appearances, and Santa's Village, Wenz will relate what it is really like to be the man in the red suit.

How St. Nicholas Became Santa Claus - Learn the historic traditions behind Nicholas of Myra and how this 4th century bishop evolved into our modern day Santa Claus. A great program for churches, civic organizations, schools or any group that is interested in the history of St. Nicholas and the Christmas Holiday.

Santa Claus of the 20th Century - A look at the people, places, and parades that have shaped our collective vision of the jolly old elf from the North Pole. Learn how the Dutch SinterKlaas became the American Santa Claus.

Santa's Village Book

Since 1959, Santa's Village in Dundee, has entertained millions. The park was born of a man who as a child had no real Christmas. Glenn Holland grew up in California during the Great Depression. His parents died by the time he was 18 years old, leaving him to care for his younger sister. As a father, he tried to give his own children the type of Christmas that he only knew in his dreams. In the early 1950s, struck with inspiration, Holland sat at his kitchen table one day and started to sketch his idea for a Christmas fairyland where all the magic of the holiday would come to life: Santa's Village. Holland and general contractor Putnam Henck built three Santa's Villages, two in California and one in Dundee.

Phillip L. Wenz is the Dundee Park's resident Santa Claus and official historian. Besides his duties at Santa's Village, Wenz has been seen in numerous televised parades and national holiday events. Utilizing his personal collection of pictures, memorabilia, and rare park photographs, readers can once again reminisce about the fun of Santa's Village throughout the years. It is all here, the Christmas Tree Ride, the twirling Snowballs, Santa's House, and the Frozen North Pole.

The Images of America series celebrates the history of neighborhoods, towns, and cities across the country. Using archival photographs, each title presents the distinctive stories from the past that shape the character of the community today. Arcadia Publishing is proud to play a part in the preservation of local heritage by making history available to all.

"Santa's Village" Book Reviews

"The face of the park and its resident historian from the time he began donning the red suit as a 23-year-old in 1986."
Robert Channick, Chicago Tribune, Chicago, IL

"This is a story not only about a new book that has been written about the Three Worlds of Santa's Village theme park, but its author, Phillip Wenz. One can't be written without the other, because both have played an important role in the northern Fox Valley history in the last 40 years."

Gerard Dizuba, Daily Herald, Arlington Heights, IL

"It was a place where every day was Christmas and Santa Claus was there to hear the wishes of good boys and girls. For Phillip Wenz, Santa's Village was a magical place and served as his home-away-from-home for 20 years while he acted as the theme park's namesake."

Stephanie Kohl, Fox Valley Journal, Elgin, IL

"Wenz is the ideal person to share the story of the amusement park."

Myrna Petlicki, Chicago Suntimes News Group, Chicago, IL

"This book is a must read for anyone who loves history or Christmas. Mr. Wenz does a wonderful job capturing the innocence of the past, when simple things made childhood happy."

Sherrie Benoit, Daily Journal, Kankakee, IL

"Santa's Village of East Dundee might be gone, but Phil Wenz isn't letting the memory of it fade away."

Carol Sapeta, Weekly Journal, Dundee, IL

"Mr. Wenz has literally won over thousands, which makes sense, since he's been Santa since he was 4 years old. He truly does have an innate charm ... a treasure not to miss out on."

Judi Brownfield, Books at Sunset, Elgin, IL

"Spending two decades with children on his knee, Phillip Wenz has been the keeper of the hopes, dreams, and secrets of many children and adults who enjoyed the magic of Santa's Village."

Julie Mullen, Courier News, Elgin, IL

Santa Claus Productions

Specializing in the unique industry related to Christmas and the specialized tourism industry.

Santa Claus Productions was established in 1989 by Phillip L. Wenz after working four years as a promotional specialist for Instant Photo Corporation of America in Chicago. (Wenz is mostly known for his portrayal of Santa Claus with Santa's Village theme park in Dundee, Illinois. Note: Santa Claus Productions is a contracted company for Santa's Village.) Part of the company's broad base is in the tourism and special events field with its public relations skills and working knowledge of the unique Christmas industry.

Public Relations, Marketing and Advertising Overview - Project Event Management: Administration of labor, event costs and profit centers of special events and promotions. Very active in local media marketing effort as well as the national advertising campaign. Generate daily reports, event cost summaries and timeline analysis. Recruitment and development of corporate sponsorship involvement, scheduling of outside vendors and the implementation of community outreach programs. Clients have included: Houston Downtown District, Ward and Ames Entertainment of Houston, Santa's Village Theme Park, Dundee, Illinois, Brach's Candy of Chicago, and numerous civic and private organizations.

Outside Contractor/Project Coordination - Designed and application of policies, procedures and by-laws of special events. Structure of the governing body/Board of Directors for future efforts. Helped in planning, marketing and management of the event. Recruitment of the volunteer base to assist in event production. Design the creative promotional material and planned event timeline. Development and management sponsorship packages. Clients have included: The Chicago Christmas Parade Association, The Bank United Thanksgiving Day Parade in Houston, SMC Photo Promotions, Deerfield, Illinois, and numerous Chambers of Commerce.

Public Relations/Community Affairs Management - Administration of media strategies based on clients target market. Designed creative and copy for campaigns. Work with radio, television and print media buys. Consulting work with outside clients that included: Brach's Holiday Parade, The Chicago Mayor's Office of Special Events, The City of Houston, The Bank United Thanksgiving Day Parade and WGN-TV. Coordinated public relation efforts with the ADI's. Created status reports for clients, as well as tracking reports for cross promotions and bounce-back coupons. Generated billing and monthly profit and loss reports. Create and market special event promotions to major shopping centers. Provide traffic building programs and effective media relations to build event awareness and profitability. Interacted on client's behalf with outside labor acting as a liaison.

Consultant - Santa's Candy Castle/St. Nicholas Development, LLC: Research and prepared historical documentation for the historic restoration of the nation's first themed attraction, Santa's Candy Castle in Santa Claus, Indiana. Advised on attraction development, retail planning and potential sponsorships.

Consultant - Celebrate Santa Convention: Acted as Executive Producer of the recent gathering of Santa from around the world that was held in Gatlinburg, Tennessee in March 2009. Planned and produced the opening and closings scripts, power points and videos, blocked the Holly and Shamrock parade, appeared as the on air host for the parade's television broadcast.

Consultant - Grand Bear Lodge Resort: Working on the planning and development of the expanding projects of the 90 million dollar resort in Utica, Illinois.

Consultant - Santa and Co., LLC: Advised on the manufacturing of professional styled Santa Claus suits and equipment. Provided historical information and documentation of the history of Santa Claus suits and related props and equipment.

Consultant - The Weber Group: Provided historical research and information on Santa Jim Yellig for the Santa Claus Museum exhibit in Santa Claus, Indiana.

Consultant - Lockport, New York's Christmas Cottage: Advised on the design, decorations, and promotional aspects of a local Santa Claus House and Christmas Festival. Acts as counsel and mentor for the local Santa Claus.

Producer – Charles W. Howard Day: A tribute day for the legendary Santa Claus, Charles W. Howard from Albion, New York. Event included a ceremony, museum, tours of Howard's former properties, and special tributes to Howard family and friends. The event was attended by dozens of professional Santas and over 1,000 local people from Orleans County, New York.

National Special Projects Consultant and Director - Santa America: A national volunteer service organization that brings the highest quality Santas together across America to focus on our special mission: an unhurried visit by a loving, committed, trained, back-grounded Santa to families facing physical and emotional crisis. The organization is broken down into 6 segments; Hospice and Hospital Visits, Autism Support, Military Support, Disaster Relief for Children, Public Health, and Information Services.

Consultant/Contributor – “SANTA'S VILLAGE - GONE WILD!” By Christopher Dearman with Forward by Phillip L. Wenz. A revealing look at some of the fun, hilarious and outrageous stories that took place during the nearly fifty years Santa's Village in Dundee, Illinois was open. Summers spent working at Santa's Village was a rite of passage for thousands of high school kids growing up in the Chicago suburbs. It was to teach responsibility and life lessons, while bridging the gap from adolescence to adulthood in a safe environment. The book is a window into the past to see some of the coming of age stories that could only happened if you were one of the lucky ones to work at Santa's summertime home.

Producer - Jim Yellig Santa Claus Workshop: An annual event, named after the legendary Santa, that draws hundreds of Santas, Mrs. Clauses, and helper from around the world to Santa Claus, Indiana each April. The Jim Yellig Santa Claus Workshop is open to all who wish to participate no matter what your association is with any Santa group or organization. Presented as an interactive forum instead of a school, the Jim Yellig Santa Claus Workshop is designed to complement other existing Santa seminars, schools, and gatherings. The Jim Yellig Santa Claus Workshop is presented by Midwest Santa and is produced free of charge to the Santa Claus Community by the Santa Claus Oath Foundation. Just pay for personal lodging...if needed, food, and travel expenses.

Consultant/Contributor - St. Nicholas Institute: An educational seminar held in Detroit, Michigan that teaches students the history, legends, and how to accurately portray Nicholas, the 4th century Bishop of Myra, who is the basis of the Santa Claus Legend. Classes are held at Sacred Heart Byzantine Catholic Church and are under the guidance of Fr. Joseph Marquis.

Consultant/Contributor – “They Wore the Red Suit” TV Documentary. Provided historical images, film, background information, locations, and Santas for interviews for an in-depth look at the vocation and career of being Santa Claus. The documentary is produced by Larry Peter of Power Plant Productions for PBS-TV and many international film festivals.

Public and Community Relations/Contributor – “Nicholas of Myra: The Story of St. Nicholas” Movie. Aligned and works with the majority of the global St. Nicholas and Santa Claus groups to build a vital line of communication to this world -wide market to providing updates and information to the global fan-base of the movie. Acting as a liaison with media to arrange information and interview with the film's creator and director Gerald Hartke.

Santa Claus Hall of Fame, Honors, and Awards

In December 2010, Wenz was bestowed with the highest honor a Santa Claus can receive; enshrinement as a charter member into the Santa Claus Hall of Fame in Santa Claus, Indiana. Of the original 14 honorees, including the first department store Santa and several men born in the 19th century, Wenz is the first living Santa Claus to be inducted. In 2012 he was presented the “Spirit of St. Nicholas” award in Detroit by the St. Nicholas Institute.

As Santa, Wenz has been given the title of "Chicago's Very Own" by WGN-TV, awarded the 1994 Brass Ring Award for Best Theme Park Commercial by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), and received the "Hats Off 2 Houston" award from KPRC-TV in Houston. He was also recognized in 1984 by the Watseka, Illinois Area Chamber of Commerce with an award of merit for his community work as Santa Claus.