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**12.13.12**

*Santa Claus Exhumed*

*GrantStation*

**NEVADA'S KIDS NEED TO READ: LATEST VOCABULARY RANKINGS ARE PATHETIC**

In today's selection -- in 1953, the bones of the real Santa Claus -- Nikolaos of Myra, a fourth-century Greek Bishop of Myra (Demre, part of modern-day Turkey) in Lycia -- were disinterred for examination. In 2004, a three-dimensional digital reconstruction of his face was made. His modern name comes from the Dutch Sinterklaas, itself from a series of elisions and corruptions of the transliteration of "Saint Nikolaos":

"Luigi Martino could not have known what he would see on that day in May 1953 when he peered into the open crypt, which reportedly contained the bones of the real Santa Claus, St. Nicholas of Myra.

Since 1087, when they had been removed by force from Myra, a town on the southern coast of Turkey known today as Demre, the bones of Nicholas had rested undisturbed here in Bari, a seaside city on the southeastern coast of Italy. They were interred inside a sarcophagus constructed of huge blocks of reinforced concrete for safekeeping.

Then, some three hundred years after the bones had been brought to Bari, a Serbian tsar named Uros II Milutin donated a large quantity of silver that was molded to cover and decorate the rather plain and somber tomb. In a four-year renovation process beginning in 1953, Milutin's silver covering was removed in order to restore the original, gray, Romanesque design of the tomb. The Vatican made a special request to examine the bones of the saint during the restoration. Enter Luigi Martino, anatomy professor from the University of Bari.

"Just an hour before midnight on May 5, 1953, with bands of visitors and pilgrims keeping candlelit vigil outside the Basilica di San Nicola, Martino, the Archbishop of Bari, and members of a specially appointed pontifical commission descended the granite steps leading into the underground, lamp-lit crypt. The contents of the tomb were more than a matter of historical reckoning -- they were a matter of civic pride and religious devotion. In just four days, Bari would host its largest and most important annual celebration, La Festa di Bari, to commemorate the relocation of the bones to Bari. There would be parades and parties and pilgrims from Russia, Greece, France, and England.

"Martino must have wondered what would happen if he did not have good news to report.

When the heavy slab capping the tomb was lifted, he found to his relief human bone remains. A skull had been carefully placed at one end by Pope Urban II himself, instigator of the First Crusade, when he consecrated the tomb just two years after it arrived in Bari. The rest of the bones were scattered about the rectangular enclosure in no particular order and submerged in 'a clear liquid, like water from a rock.'

Pilgrims referred to this liquid as the manna or myrrh of Nicholas; once a year Dominican priests bent low to a small opening in the sarcophagus to collect the liquid in a vial. Martino took thousands of detailed measurements and x-ray photographs.

Some sketches were made of the measurements of the skull and frame. But an authentic reconstruction of Nicholas would only come 50 years later, as advancements led to technology far more sophisticated than what was available to Martino.

"By 2004 the imaging technology was ready. Caroline Wilkinson, a facial anthropologist with the University of Manchester, England, used the measurements taken by Martino in the 1950s and some luminous sound probes of the tomb to generate a three-dimensional digital reconstruction of St. Nicholas' face and head for a one-hour BBC documentary [see above and below]. His skin was given an olive complexion, reflecting his Mediterranean ancestry; his hair and beard were colored white, signifying the fact that the bones in the tomb belonged to an elderly man, well over the age of sixty. Approximately five feet ten inches in height, his most distinguishing features were his heavy-set jaw and a broken nose. Wilkinson comments, 'It must have been a very hefty blow because it's the nasal bones between the eyes that are broken.' In the media coverage of the story, this detail quickly became the most tantalizing tid-bit.

How did it happen? Wilkinson shrugs her shoulders and conjectures, 'I heard he once punched a bishop,' referring to a legendary altercation between St. Nicholas and Arius, an infamous heretic, at the Council of Nicaea in 325. Others speculated about a hitherto unknown rough and rowdy past or an incident that might have occurred when he was arrested during the great persecution of Christianity in 303. No conclusions can be reached with absolute historical certainty. What is more, Martino had earlier reported that nearly all the bones were chipped or broken, reflecting the fact that they were hastily gathered by sailors and roughly transported from the southern coast of Turkey to the port of Bari in 1087. The break in the nasal ridge might be similarly explained.

"But the bones present other clues about the man. From his study, Martino observesthat Nicholas probably suffered from chronic arthritis and perhaps pronounced cephalic pain, evidenced by an unnatural thickening of the inside of the skull bone. Of course, it must be remembered that he died at an old age, so it is unknown whether the arthritis and head pressure were natural ailments of an elderly man or untimely pains that he carried in his body for years."

Author: Adam C. English

The Saint Who Would Be Santa Claus: The True Life and Trials of  
Nicholas of Myra           Pages: 3-5

by Adam C. English by Baylor University Press 2012

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## **GrantStation**

### *National Funding Opportunities*

\*Support for Social Justice Organizations

#### **[Peace Development Fund: Community Organizing Grant Program](#)**

The Peace Development Fund is committed to supporting organizations that recognize that peace will never be sustained unless it is based on justice and an appreciation of both the diversity and unity of the human family. The Fund's Community Organizing Grant Program provides support to U.S.-based groups that are engaged in community organizing work for social justice. Priority is given to new or emerging organizations, efforts that have difficulty securing funds from other sources, and groups that receive little other foundation support. These technical assistance grants of \$500 to \$2,500 may be used for trainings, consulting services, travel to conferences or meetings, purchase of equipment, and other short-term needs that will provide long term benefits to the organization. Applying organizations must have an annual budget of \$250,000 or less. The application deadline is January 4, 2013. Visit the Fund's website to download the application guidelines and forms.

Youth Environmental Education Programs Funded

#### **[Captain Planet Foundation](#)**

The Captain Planet Foundation supports educational programs that enable youth to understand and appreciate our world through hands-on projects to improve the environment. The Foundation is interested in funding innovative programs that inspire youth to participate in community service through environmental stewardship activities. An additional priority is to fund programs that encourage environment-based education in schools. Nonprofit organizations and public schools may apply for grants of up to \$2,500; however, preference is given to requests seeking seed funding of \$500 or less. Projects with matching funds or in-kind support are also given priority. The first application deadline for 2013 is February 28. Application guidelines are available on the Foundation's website.

Travel Grants Available for Native Artist Collaborations

#### **[New England Foundation for the Arts: National Native Artist Exchange](#)**

The National Native Artist Exchange, administered by the New England Foundation for the Arts, is designed to support the exchange of artistic skills and knowledge among Native artists.

American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian artists throughout the United States may apply to teach, learn, and collaborate in traditional and/or contemporary Native art forms through travel from one region to another across the nation. The applicant must identify a collaborating artist and specific project as part of the exchange, which must be beneficial to both artists. Grants of up to \$1,500 will be awarded based on budgets appropriate to the scope of travel. Requests must be received at least two calendar months prior to the beginning date of the proposed exchange. Visit the New England Foundation for the Arts website to review the program guidelines.

Partnerships Addressing Habitat Restoration Supported

**National Fish and Wildlife Foundation: Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program**

The Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program, an initiative of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, supports community-based wetland, forest, riparian, and coastal habitat restoration projects throughout the United States. Support is provided for projects that build diverse partnerships and foster natural resource stewardship through environmental education, outreach, and restoration. Partnerships should include at least five organizations (nonprofit organizations, government agencies, educational institutions, businesses, etc.) that contribute to project success through funding, land, and/or other in-kind services. Matching grants will range from \$20,000 to \$50,000, with an average of \$25,000 to \$35,000. The 2013 Request for Proposals also includes a separate Urban Water component that targets habitat in urban watersheds throughout the U.S. The application deadline is February 7, 2013. Visit the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation website to review the Request for Proposals.

***Regional Funding Opportunities***

Funds for Children's Programs in Minnesota

**The Sheltering Arms Foundation**

The Sheltering Arms Foundation provides grants to nonprofit organizations located in and providing services in the state of Minnesota that benefit children and their families who have the least access to resources. The Foundation's funding priorities include the following: Improve Access to Early Childhood Education and Childcare, Support Educational Enrichment, and Strengthen Family Relationships. The Foundation supports direct service programs and advocacy efforts that raise the level of public awareness and commitment to the well-being of children around the Foundation's funding priorities. The 2013 application deadline is January 18. (Prior to submission of a funding request, organizations are strongly encouraged to contact Foundation staff to talk about how a project fits with the Foundation's guidelines.) Visit the Foundation's website to learn more about the funding guidelines and application process.

Fellowships for Teachers in Targeted Districts

**Fund for Teachers**

The Fund for Teachers awards fellowships to pre-K-12 classroom teachers in selected school districts in a number of states and Washington, DC, so that they may participate in training and enriching activities that will improve their skills as teachers. Applicants must propose a summer activity and explain how the endeavor will make the applicant a better teacher; how the applicant

will implement his or her new improved skills in the classroom; and how these improved skills will benefit students, curricula, and the school. Teachers must have a minimum of three years experience and be full-time teachers spending at least 50% of their time in the classroom. Eligible teachers may apply as individuals (funding limit of \$5,000) or as a team (funding limit of \$10,000). The application deadline is January 31, 2013. Visit the Fund's website for detailed fellowship guidelines for each location.

Grants Promote Services for Texan Seniors

**Isla Carroll Turner Friendship Trust**

The Isla Carroll Turner Friendship Trust provides support for nonprofit organizations throughout the state of Texas that provide services to the elderly. Types of programs considered for funding include health centers, recreation programs, retirement services, Alzheimer's initiatives, meal delivery programs, nursing facilities, etc. Support is also provided for primary caregiver education programs focusing on the elderly and nursing scholarships for students specializing in gerontology. Grants generally range from \$5,000 to \$50,000. Grant funds must be used within the state for the benefit of those age 60 years of age and above or those born with Down's syndrome age 47 years and above. All application forms and supporting documents must be received by the office by no later than 5 pm on January 31, 2013 to be considered. Application guidelines and forms are available on the Trust's website, including a list of required supporting documents.

Support for Community Forestry Projects in the Eastern U.S.

**Arbor Day Foundation: TD Green Streets**

TD Green Streets, a grant program funded by TD Bank and administered by the Arbor Day Foundation, provides funds to municipalities in the communities served by TD Bank in the Eastern U.S. Through the program, municipalities are eligible to receive one of ten \$20,000 grants in support of local forestry projects in low- to moderate-income neighborhoods within their communities. Priority will be given to projects that are designed to promote innovative, sustainable practices and tools that benefit the community's urban forest management plan. To be eligible for a TD Green Streets grant, municipalities must be current Arbor Day Foundation Tree City USA-recognized communities within TD Bank's footprint. The application deadline is January 31, 2013. Visit the Arbor Day Foundation website to learn more about the program.

***Federal Grant and Loan Programs***

Funds Available for Habitat Restoration in the Great Lakes

**Department of Commerce: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

The Great Lakes Habitat Restoration Regional Partnership Grants program supports organizations that have the capacity and expertise to identify, evaluate, fund, and administer coastal habitat restoration projects in U.S. Great Lakes Areas of Concern. The application deadline is January 15, 2013.

Boating Safety Programs Supported

**Coast Guard**

The National Nonprofit Organization Boating Safety Grant Program provides support to reduce

the number of accidents, injuries, and deaths on America's waterways and create a safe and enjoyable experience for the boating public. The application deadline is January 25, 2013.

Program Supports Children's Health

**Department of Health and Human Services**

The Medical Home Implementation for Children with Special Health Care Needs program supports a national resource and technical assistance effort to implement and spread the medical home model to all children and youth, particularly children with special healthcare needs, children who are vulnerable or medically underserved, and pediatric populations served by state public health programs and federal agencies. The application deadline is January 28, 2013.

Program Funds Network to Strengthen Communities

**Department of Housing and Urban Development**

The Strong Cities, Strong Communities National Resource Network program provides support for the development of a network that will help communities make more effective local investments to strengthen economic growth and resiliency. The application deadline is January 28, 2013.

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**Social Science Palooza III**

By [DAVID BROOKS](#)

NYT

December 10, 2012

Elections come and go, but social science marches on. Here are some recent research findings that struck my fancy.

Organic foods may make you less generous. In a study published in *Social Psychology and Personality Science*, Kendall J. Eskine had people look at organic foods, comfort foods or a group of control foods. Those who viewed organic foods subsequently volunteered less time to help a needy stranger and they judged moral transgressions more harshly.

Men are dumber around women. Thijs Verwijmeren, Vera Rommeswinkel and Johan C. Karremans gave men cognitive tests after they had interacted with a woman via computer. In the study, published in the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, the male cognitive performance declined after the interaction, or even after the men merely anticipated an interaction with a woman.

Women inhibit their own performance. In a study published in *Self and Identity*, Shen Zhang, Toni Schmader and William M. Hall gave women a series of math tests. On some tests they signed their real name, on others they signed a fictitious name. The women scored better on the fictitious name tests, when their own reputation was not at risk.

High unemployment rates may not hurt Democratic incumbents as much. In the *American Political Science Review*, John R. Wright looked at 175 midterm gubernatorial elections and four presidential elections between 1994 and 2010. Other things being equal, high unemployment rates benefit the Democratic Party. The effect is highest when Republicans are the incumbents, but even when the incumbent is a Democrat, high unemployment rates still benefit Democratic candidates.

People filter language through their fingers. In a study published in the *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, Kyle Jasmin and Daniel Casasanto asked people to rate real words, fictitious words and neologisms. Words composed of letters on the right side of the QWERTY keyboard were viewed more positively than words composed of letters from the left side.

We communicate, process and feel emotions by mimicking the facial expressions of the people around us. For a study in *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, Paula M. Niedenthal, Maria Augustinova and others studied young adults who had used pacifiers as babies, and who thus could not mimic as easily. They found that pacifier use correlated with less emotional intelligence in males, though it did not predict emotional processing skills in girls.

Judges are toughest around election time. Judges in Washington State are elected and re-elected into office. In a study for *The Review of Economic Statistics*, Carlos Berdejó and Noam Yuchtman found that these judges issue sentences that are 10 percent longer at their end of the political cycle than at the beginning.

New fathers pay less. In a study for the *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Michael Dahl, Cristian Dezso and David Gaddis Ross studied male Danish C.E.O.'s before and after their wives gave birth to children. They found that male C.E.O.'s generally pay their employees less generously after fathering a child. The effect is stronger after a son is born. Female employees are less affected than male employees. C.E.O.'s also tend to pay themselves more after the birth of a child.

Affluent neighborhoods challenge mental equilibrium. In a study for the *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, Terese J. Lund and Eric Dearing found that boys reported higher levels of delinquency and girls reported higher levels of anxiety and depression when they lived in affluent neighborhoods compared with middle-class neighborhoods. Boys' delinquency and girls' anxiety-depression levels were lowest when they were from affluent families living in middle-class neighborhoods.

Premarital doubts are significant. In a study in the *Journal of Family Psychology*, Justin Lavner, Benjamin Karney and Thomas Bradbury found that women who had cold feet before marriage had significantly higher divorce rates four years later. Male premarital doubts did not correlate with more divorce.

Women use red to impress men. In a study for the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, Andrew Elliot, Tobias Greitemeyer and Adam Pazda found that women expecting to converse with an attractive man were more likely to select a red versus green shirt than women expecting to converse with an unattractive man or another woman.

Birth date affects corporate success. In a study for *Economics Letters*, Qianqian Du, Huasheng Gao and Maurice Levi found that C.E.O.'s are disproportionately likely to be born in June and July.

It's always worth emphasizing that no one study is dispositive. Many, many studies do not replicate. Still, these sorts of studies do remind us that we are influenced by a thousand breezes permeating the unconscious layers of our minds. They remind us of the power of social context.

They're also nice conversation starters. If you find this sort of thing interesting, [you really should check out Kevin Lewis's blog](#) at National Affairs. He provides links to hundreds of academic studies a year, from which these selections have been drawn.

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## **Vegetable Waste to Zero Waste in La Pinata, Chile**

Sunday, 09 December 2012 07:22 By [Cecilia Allen](#) and [Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, Other Worlds](#) | Report

*"Environmental Possibilities: Zero Waste" features new ways of thinking, acting, and shaping government policy that are circling the globe. Each week, we highlight a success story in the zero waste movement, excerpted from the report [On the Road to Zero Waste: Successes and Lessons from Around the World](#) by the [Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives \(GAIA\)](#). GAIA is a powerful worldwide alliance of more than 650 grassroots groups, non-governmental organizations, and individuals in over 90 countries. Their collective goal is a just, toxic-free world without incineration. Other Worlds is excited to promote the work of GAIA and the organized communities it works with, and hopes that the stories inspire you and others to begin moving your home, town or city, nation, and planet toward zero waste.*

The Chilean community of La Pintana has found that recycling the largest segment of their waste – fruits, vegetables, and yard clippings – can save them money, produce valuable compost, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The program cost very little to initiate and is already making a substantial contribution to the community's financial and environmental sustainability.

Despite belonging to the national capital region, La Pintana is one of the poorest communities in Chile, and 80 percent of the environmental agency's budget is allocated to the collection and disposal of solid waste. While other governments might see this as an obstacle to the incorporation of waste prevention and resource recovery strategies, La Pintana focused on making better use of its available resources.

The head of Dirección de Gestión Ambiental (Environmental Management Agency) of La Pintana explained the municipality's decision to take a new approach to waste management with the adage, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over, expecting to achieve different results." Recognizing, as well, the importance of continuing that which is working well, the La Pintana commune identified all the actors involved in waste management (e.g., businesses, formal and informal recyclers, citizens, government bodies) and their different levels of responsibility in waste generation. The municipality understands that discarded materials are resources, and as a result, waste is viewed as an opportunity, not as a problem to get rid of. The municipality also understands that the solutions need to be local; the further waste travels from the point of generation, the bigger a problem it becomes, and the more likely its management will be unsustainable.

### **Separation and Collection**

In December of 2005 the municipality launched its new program. Unlike many materials recovery strategies adopted in Latin America, this one did not focus on recycling dry materials, but on recovering vegetable waste. This decision was fundamental, since vegetable waste is the



largest waste stream, the one that makes recovery of recyclables more difficult, and the one that creates greenhouse gas emissions and contaminants in landfills. The program was built upon existing infrastructure and local financial resources. It has been steadily growing since its launch, and while it still has only modest participation rates, there is an ongoing effort to increase participation whenever the budget allows for more public education campaigns.

The government provides 35-liter bins to residents for vegetable waste. People are asked only to separate out fruits and vegetables for collection and composting—not meat or dairy products, although some end up being mixed in anyway. The consumption of meat in this poor commune is very low, however, so there is little animal product waste.

The system for collecting separated waste was organized by simply rescheduling existing routes. Consequently, neither the costs nor the number of trucks increased. One third of the city is serviced by the municipality, and the rest by a private company; both collect two waste streams: vegetable and other.

The municipality conducts a communication campaign with residents in door-to-door visits. During the visits and in the ongoing workshops held by the government, source separation is emphasized. Both direct and indirect incentives to separate waste are provided. Citizens receive free compost, and their neighborhoods are improved with the construction of public parks, planting of new trees, maintenance of sports clubs, etc., that improve their quality of life and their relationship with the environment.

So far, almost 80 percent of the households have been visited, although it is estimated that overall only 28 percent of the households are separating their vegetable waste. According to the municipality, the low participation rate is the consequence of some bad experiences with the collection service (e.g., trucks that did not meet the schedule) and a lack of space to keep two bins in multi-story buildings. Whenever it has the funds available, the municipality undertakes new communication campaigns to increase participation rates.

### **The Informal Sector**

While the government is focused on recovering vegetable waste, a portion of dry materials is recovered through two channels. One is through “green points” built by the municipality, where non-profits place containers for people to drop off glass, plastics, and Tetra Pak containers. The non-profits manage the green points and keep the income from the sale of the materials. The other channel is through informal recyclers. The leaflets that the government hands out to encourage source separation also ask citizens to separate paper and metals and give them to informal recyclers. The informal recyclers collect these materials directly from households and then sell them for recycling.

Although the municipality does confer a degree of recognition upon the informal recyclers, it has also blocked their efforts to organize, and they still work in precarious conditions. The government’s perspective is that the municipality is willing to encourage people to hand recyclables to the recyclers but that it is ultimately a private business, so the informal recyclers need to develop and maintain their business on their own. The full inclusion of the informal

sector in the formal waste management system—with payment for their service and the rights and protections of any formal worker—remains a challenge.

## Recovery and Treatment

Once collected, the source separated vegetable waste is transported to a 7,500 m<sup>2</sup> treatment plant located within the commune. The site includes a large compost site that handles 18 tons of vegetable waste per day, and a vermiculture area that treats between 18 and 20 more tons per day. Total input in this plant, including vegetable waste from households and street markets as well as yard trimmings, is 36-38 tons per day. The waste arrives very well separated, with only 0.04 percent of impurities (mostly plastic bags that some people still use in the containers). Four people work at the site, each earning a monthly salary of about US \$600, which is above minimum wage and comparable to other similar jobs. The 2011 annual budget for maintenance and operations was US \$31,000.

Initial investments in the program were low; the original treatment plant consisted of a small compost pile and some worms. As the program has grown over time, more piles have been added to the plant and the worms have been reproducing naturally. Total recovery of source-separated vegetable waste, including residential waste, yard trimmings from maintenance of green areas, and vegetable waste from street markets is 20.5 percent of all the waste collected in La Pintana.

In addition, about 1,000 liters of used kitchen oil are recovered daily, which are turned into biodiesel fuel for municipal collection trucks and grinders that make woodchips to use as mulch. Construction and demolition waste is managed privately by the producers. Thus, the municipal investment is confined to recovering vegetable waste and disposing of residuals.

Despite being a very poor community, La Pintana shows that a good analysis of the local situation, the setting of clear goals, and an efficient use of resources allow municipalities to do more than just put waste materials in landfills. By focusing on the largest and most problematic waste stream—organic materials—the community has reduced environmental and economic damage and used recovered materials to improve the local environment.

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## **NEVADA'S KIDS NEED TO READ: LATEST VOCABULARY RANKINGS ARE PATHETIC**

Nevada's fourth-graders scored higher than their peers in only six other states on the vocabulary section of the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress, released this week by the U.S. Department of Education. Nevada eighth-graders surpassed their peers in only five other states. In other words, Nevada's average scores were in the bottom 15 percent.

<http://erj.reviewjournal.com/ct/uz3688753Biz15374917>


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Saving Energy & Helping Troubled NV Kids

Mike Clifford, Public News Service-NV

<http://www.publicnewsservice.org/index.php?/content/article/29788-1>

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(12/12/12) LAS VEGAS  In a decision that could affect troubled children and utility customers, the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada is expected to rule this month on energy-efficiency grants for nonprofit groups.

Typically, most folks would not connect youths who have been victims of abuse and utility bills, says Boys' Town Nevada executive director Howard Olshansky, but his organization now saves \$1,800 a year on energy bills because of lighting improvements at its Nevada facility.

"Nonprofits are always looking for ways to best utilize their dollars. If we can be more efficient, save money, it directly impacts the work that we do with people in our communities."

Advocates say more than \$180 million in potential savings are at stake in Nevada. The PUC is expected to issue a decision before Christmas about how much NV Energy, the state's largest utility, should provide in grants to nonprofits for energy-efficiency programs.

NV Energy proposes putting \$50 million into all its efficiency programs next year, but Howard Geller, executive director of the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project, hopes the PUC opts for the full \$75 million funding option. He says that would give the most help to Nevada nonprofits and other utility customers.

"If the commission approves what we're recommending, there would be - just according to the utility's own analysis - \$187 million in net benefits for the customers."

The Bureau of Consumer Protection has recommended cutting the funding because of the tough economy, but Geller calls that shortsighted - especially for NV Energy.

"The utility's doing it because it costs a lot less to save electricity than it does to supply electricity from a new power plant."

Last year, NV Energy provided \$7,500 in grants to help Boys' Town retrofit its lighting system. The nonprofit served 600 families and 1,500 young people in and around Las Vegas in 2011.

More information is online at [swenergy.org](http://swenergy.org).