

News Releases

Dec. 19, 2006

Elementary Schools Use Holiday Season for Good Works

Elementary schools in the DeKalb School District used the holiday season to help their communities and the world.

Fourth grade students at Brooks Elementary organized a bake sale and canned food drive as part of their social studies classes. In addition, some students made craft items to sell. All baked goods and craft items were sold for 25 cents each. Students raised \$70. A \$50 donation increased their total to \$120, which was donated to Hope Haven. Food collected in the food drive was donated to area food pantries and Safe Passage. The project was linked to Brooks' Great Expectations program. The life principle for December was "Service—Giving of one's time and energies to another."

At Tyler Elementary, the K-Kids Club held a canned food drive to benefit Safe Passage. It ran for the first two weeks in December, and the whole school was invited to participate. Students collected 488 cans or other items. Mrs. Aska's first grade class donated the most with 181 items.

Cortland Elementary students also contributed to a food drive. Through the students' efforts, 25 Cortland families will receive a complete turkey dinner for the holidays. The dinner includes a frozen turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, canned fruit and vegetables, and bread and dessert mixes. Susan Bivens, Cortland special education teacher, has been coordinating the food drive for at least eight years. Bivens said the number of families who qualify for the food basket has increased from 6-8 families the first year to 50 this year. Secret Santas from the staff and community also contributed to make sure each food basket was complete.

Jefferson Elementary's staff adopted a family with an ill parent. The staff presented the family with a \$1,000 Wal-Mart gift card, made a cash gift to help pay bills, and shopped for presents for the children. "In addition to our staff," said Merri-lynn Seaburg, Jefferson principal, "some of our volunteers and other friends contributed money. The DeKalb Moose

Club also gave a generous donation to help the family."

Like Jefferson, Littlejohn Elementary also adopted a family for the holidays. The Spirit Club raised money for the family through bake sales and donations from students and staff members. In addition, Littlejohn second graders are participating in their second year of fundraising for the Heifer International Project. Heifer International is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to ending hunger worldwide. "They (and their teachers) gave up their recesses for a whole week to make beaded bracelets that they will sell to students and staff," said Charlotte Kreuder, Littlejohn principal. Last year the Heifer International president came to Littlejohn and brought some of the animals that were funded by the project for students to see.

Wright Elementary's two third grade classes worked together on a fundraiser to raise money to adopt an orca whale through The Whale Museum (www.whalemuseum.org). Since each class wants to adopt their own whale, students needed to raise \$120. Third grade parents sent in at least 2 boxes of full-sized candy canes which were then sold to other students for 25 cents.

"Each third grader has a specific job to do during the fundraiser," said Lisa Haapoja, Wright third grade teacher. "Some were in advertising, making posters and flyers, as well as going to each class to talk up the sale; others are bankers or order takers, working directly with customers; still other kids are in production, filling orders and sorting them into classroom mailboxes for delivery. All 45 kids work together to make the sale a success."

In their three-day sale, Wright students earned \$661, minus money spent to purchase additional candy canes, bringing their total to \$567. "We're figuring we sold approximately 2,645 candy canes to a school with a population of about 280 kids," Haapoja said. Third grade students decided to spend the extra \$447 on a field trip to the Shedd Aquarium for a whale class and on items for the school.