



Elm Street School students wrapped 992 gifts last Saturday in the ESSence of Giving event. (Courtesy photo)

Elm Street School students learn about the joy of giving

LACONIA — Six years ago the Elm Street School community recognized the need for students to experience the joy of giving. At that time, the ESSence of Giving event began. Throughout the year, donations of used items are collected. Students are then offered the opportunity to go with a volunteer to choose up to 10 gifts for family members. Next they go to a wrapping station where the gifts are wrapped. While the student is shopping, their VISTESS parent group sets up the art room with refreshments for the parents to enjoy.

Volunteers who set up and run the event include ESS staff past and present, DKG members, Junior Honor Society members, and community

members. Four years ago, St. Vincent de Paul and ESS paired up with the Kohl's Care program. This program provides six or more volunteers, as well as the opportunity to receive a \$500 grant. For the past three years, the school has received the grant, half of which benefits the food pantry and half of which is spent on wrapping supplies.

On Saturday, Dec. 2, they had 118 students attend and wrap 992 gifts. Four car-loads of remaining items were brought to St. Vincent de Paul. A total of \$153.15 was collected and given to the food pantry, all at an event that costs no money at all. In the past six years, this event has donated \$2,362 to the food pantry.



Volunteers at the event included students, staff and community members. (Courtesy photo)

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