

The Advertiser-News

Print Page

UPDATED: FEBRUARY 4, 2009

Advertiser News > News

Children help make lives brighter here and abroad



SFC Anthony Yezuita, stationed at Camp Bucca, Iraq, delivers toys to children in Iraq that were collected by children from the Hamburg School.

PUBLISHED: FEBRUARY 4, 2009

Students act on their motto to help others

Hamburg — Hamburg students had a chance recently to make good on their pledge to practice acts of kindness locally and afar. They collected small toys that were personally given to children in Iraq by their guidance counselor's husband, Anthony Yezuita, who is stationed at Camp Bucca.

Because the war in Iraq has touched the school in a very personal way, the children also had the opportunity to know their donations were received.

In addition to "Tony Yez," as SFC Yezuita is known, two Hamburg School teachers are currently serving in Iraq. Gym teacher Barry Douglass was deployed at the same time as Yezuita in June, along with a massive group from the region. Capt. Suzanne Williamson, a Hamburg School special education teacher, is currently en route. The school's faculty numbers 45.

School presses for action

The students have been focusing on becoming active members of society, encouraged by their winter assembly, in which the message was "to give of ourselves," explained Kerri Yezuita.

Students began with the idea of thinking globally and acting locally, at home, in the Hamburg neighborhood, in Sussex County and even across the world. Children in first and second grade decided to practice acts of kindness at home by being more considerate and appreciative of their family members. Students in fourth and sixth grade were challenged to give of themselves in caring ways to the town and community. These students then shared their experiences of kindness during the assembly to inspire others to put "actions" into their "spirit of giving," Yezuita said.

All students were asked to bring a can of food to the assembly which was later distributed to area families and food pantries. For

one month, donations were collected to help families in Hamburg and as donations came in, a star with the donor's name was displayed in the school gymnasium. The visual of the "donor stars" displayed all around the gym punctuated the idea that if everybody contributes a little, a big difference can be made. More than 10 Hamburg families were helped with their food and electric bills from this collection. "I'm very impressed with the volume of generous donations made, in spite of the difficult economic times we're all currently facing," commented school nurse Mary Brady.

Hands across the water

That was how the children helped locally. But in an effort to reach across the world, Hamburg School students made a collection of small toys to be sent overseas to children living in war-torn areas. Three boxes of small toys were mailed with the hope that a small measure of comfort would be provided to a child, said Yezuita, the school guidance counselor.

Because of the school's direct connection to the wars abroad, many Hamburg students are affected by the situation. Every child had been a student of gym teacher Barry Douglass, for example. So, it was a great treat when SFC Douglass made a surprise visit during the school assembly on Dec. 22. They were thrilled to see him take the time from his brief family visit to stop in and see them during their "Spirit of Giving" assembly, Yezuita said.

"He is the epitome of giving and his example teaches us that by helping each other."