



# Service Learning News

## 11.17.08

by Judy Brookhart and Amanda Kuhlen

Dear Parents,

With the first quarter, Light the Night, and conferences behind us, we turn our service vision to the arrival of winter. Before we mention our upcoming project, we can't miss the opportunity to reflect on the ongoing Willard Food Pantry collection. A sister organization, the Akron-Canton Food Bank, recently reported that they had given away 2 million pounds of food during the past month, wildly breaking the previous record. In these times, many are in need. As an institution that serves children, our hearts go out to little ones who wake up and go to sleep hungry. It is good to know we are helping, and that we will continue to help as the months go on.

Last year, at the end of the holiday season, Mrs. Gutlove, mother of Elena (Gr. 4) and Nicolas (Gr. 6), became aware that a local clothing store was going to throw away the artificial pine trees that had decorated their building. Enterprising as she is, she asked for them and donated them to the service learning program in hopes that we could do something with them. They languished in the Parents Association room, and then were moved up the hill as that storage space became too crowded with auction items. Finally, it is their time to take center stage!

We are offering the 20 small trees to any entity within our community – a class, grade, office or individual. The challenge is to decorate them, not for a holiday but to light up a nook of our adopted senior citizen high-rise apartment building with creativity. It may be that a group will offer an Indians or Browns tree, a tree dedicated to a hobby such as knitting or bead designs, a tree that reminds us of winter with birds and berries, or perhaps an academic discipline such as a Parisian tree, or one focused on a favorite book.

In mid-December a group from school will load the trees on our bus and travel to the Fowler Apartments where they will deliver them and stay for awhile, sharing cider and cookies with the residents. It is our hope that the richness of the experience will be on both sides – that the residents will enjoy bright spots around their building where children have worked to create something pleasurable; and that our students will both have creative fun and feel the happiness that comes with doing something nice for someone else!



Serving together,

*Judy & Amanda*