

SPECIAL EDITION

Day of Giving

2009 - 2010

Every year for the past seven years, each of our classes at Central Academy has taken time on the last day before our winter break to give back to our community. There has always been two criteria for the work we do on that day: first, it needs to be something that is usually done by adults, and secondly, it needs to be work that is usually done by an adult. Over the years, this has come to be a really important part of who we are as a community at Central.

This year, as in the past, each of our classes, and each of our middle school advisories, took part in this day. Deborah Meier has written about activities that involve not only our behaviors, but also our minds, as we consistently use both to make us contributing citizens. She called these activities “habits of mind.” Our hope, as we do this work each year, is that each of our students will remember these experiences into adulthood, and will continue a “habit of mind” and body, and continue as an adult to give back to our community, ultimately making Middletown, and any other community in which they might live, a better place.

I hope you will take the time to read through the various articles in this special edition of our newsletter to learn about the experiences our students had this year on our “Day of Giving.”

Volunteering is the tune of joy in **Dr Suiter’s middle school advisory**. For the Day of Giving, we went to the Breiel Avenue Church of God to fix lunches for those less fortunate in our community. The sandwiches were put in lunch bags with other food, and church members randomly handed out the lunches to homeless and needy people on Christmas Eve. Our advisory also helped hand food and gift baskets to grateful Middletown residents faced with financial challenges this year.

After doing community service, our advisory realizes that the Day of Giving is about more than just going out for one day to have fun with class mates. We realized that the day of service is about serving your community and helping those who might not be as fortunate as you. Our advisory kept this in mind while making sandwiches when we came up with the motto: *We are not just making sandwiches; we are making someone’s day.* In my opinion no one understood this better than *Sommer*, who became upset when we ran out of bread for our ham sandwiches. All in all Dr. Suiter’s advisory would call our Day of Giving a success. *Contributed by Mikala S.*

EARLY PRIMARY CLASSROOMS

Mrs. Brooks' class volunteered their time for the Day of Giving by dusting/cleaning hand-held percussion instruments in Central's music room and helping to organize music room manipulatives and supplies. The class was very excited to help with these important tasks. The students gathered in a circle (as they always do in the music room) and while they were working, **Mrs. Hicks** taught them the names of the instruments and how to hold and play them correctly. Now, over time, as the students use the instruments during music class, they will likely remember what they learned and apply this knowledge! Mrs. Hicks was very happy to have their assistance.

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This year, for our annual Day of Giving in December, **Mrs. Jantusch's Early Primary** class and **Mrs. Larison's Intermediate** class traveled together to the First United Methodist Church (across from the public library). Students were paired together, Early Primary with Intermediate students. With their buddies, they completed one of two important tasks: organizing the clothing depot/closet or filling holiday food baskets. During our hour of service, each and every student listened to directions, worked efficiently with their buddy, and completed their assigned task with a smile. Tammy, the director of neighborhood services at the church, was very appreciative of our efforts! When we were finished, she told the students that what they had completed in only one hour would have taken her small staff at least four hours of work! We all left feeling like we had truly provided a necessary service and had worked to help our community.

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Although **Ms. Roe** was not able to attend the day of giving, **Miss Daly** (a former Reading Diagnostician at Central and Mrs. Roe's Substitute) and **Mrs. Beatty** (Central's art teacher) were prepared to take the very anxious **Early Primary** class to the church next door. Our great neighbors at First Christian Church allowed us to help make the luminaries to light the way to the Christmas Eve service.

A small group of students helped to get the milk jugs out of storage, filled the bottom with sand, and replaced the candles from last year. While the one group was working on luminaries, the other group used their creativity to make the candles for the inside service more colorful by coloring the circular paper to catch the wax that would drip from the candles. Each candle had a personalized and unique piece of artwork on it. The people from the church were wonderful with the students, and we all had a lot of fun.

One of the high school church members who came to help prepare for the Christmas Eve service taught the kids a song. At the end, and everyone joined in singing. We hope that the lesson the students walked away with is that volunteering is fun and helpful! It was a very successful day of giving!

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Spreading good cheer is what giving is all about! Everyone loves to receive cards and that is just what **Mrs. Uhl's Early Primary class** did! Our class was fortunate enough to spend their Day of Giving making holiday cards for our Central Academy neighbors. The student's worked diligently on making creative, heart-felt cards to hand out. Then, in small groups with adults, the students bundled up and headed out toward different streets in the neighborhood.

The students excitedly rang doorbells and waited for our friendly neighbors to answer the door. Smiling brightly, the students wished the neighbors "Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year"! Eagerly waiting at one door, *Ahvonni* handed her card to an elderly woman who was taken back by our kindheartedness. She

mentioned that she doesn't get many visitors and she truly appreciated our display of the holiday spirit. Another neighbor has a niece and nephew who attend Central Academy, and she was thrilled to see what acts of thoughtfulness we were doing for the community.

The groups of students returned to school with a buzz of excitement and were eager to make cards to hand out to more neighbors! The students are looking forward to spreading their good cheer again next year!

LATE PRIMARY CLASSROOMS

"Joy" is the word that **Mrs. C. Amburgey's** class felt after they left Kensington Place for our Day of Giving. For the last five years or so. My classes have been going to this nursing home to read to the residents. My husband's (Ken) aunt has lived there many years, and she always looked forward to my class' visits and listening to them read. This summer Aunt Liz passed away, but I still wanted to carry on the tradition. The students choose a story they have written and then read it to many different residents. All the residents meet in the dining room, and the children line up at each table to read to them. We end the visit with Ken playing the piano while the students sing. The residents love this. This year my class read to a woman who was 97 years old. The students could not believe it. She was a teacher for 37 years. Many wondered if that is where I will live after teaching 37 years? I don't know who had more fun the residents or the student. *Sierra* said, "I really thought it was fun. I like reading to older people." *Au'Braylen* said, "I liked it because I got to read to nice people, and they clapped and smiled." My class not only gave, but we also received.



Our Day of Giving has become more than a tradition at Central Academy. It is about more than going somewhere and stuffing envelopes or organizing supplies. In **Mrs. Andrade and Miss Zumbahlen's room**, our Late Primary students found that a day of giving reminded them of the wonderful resources and yearlong givers right here in their own community. When we walked the streets of downtown Middletown, the work that some of our citizens contribute on a daily basis in an act to revitalize our community was evident.

For this year's Day of Giving, our class learned that ***Sue Rogers***, who heads up The Art Central Foundation, has a lifelong passion for the arts. The Foundation's mission statement reads, "We will advance the creative spirit and diversity of the Art Central District." This group provides activities centered around the arts like their Summer Art Workshops for children. But more impressively, they are thinking globally. They want people from all over to visit, shop, dine, and enjoy the art events.

Our class really did make a difference to The Art Central Foundation by cleaning and preparing mailings. But what we really walked away with was the inspiration of what we can also do to help nurture good

things to come for our community. Thanks to The Art Central Foundation for showing us that every little bit counts.



Students in Mrs. Van Ostrand's class went to the fire station on Clinton St. across from the post office for Day of Giving. The firefighters put them right to work. Everyone got a turn to hose down or wash the fire trucks. While *Jacob, Timmy, and Braden* continued washing the trucks, *Logan* got busy vacuuming. We also folded laundry, swept floors, and cleaned the weight room. Students were so excited to help and contribute in any way that they could. They realized that Day of Giving was contributing and doing for others. It was so amazing to see our students happily going about their work of *giving* to our firefighters who are there for us in a moment's notice. Way to go!



INTERMEDIATE CLASSROOMS

Every year at Central we have a Day of Giving. The Day of Giving is a day when Central students, give back to the community in some way. This year our class, The Muenchenburgey Crew, wrapped gifts for children at Hope House. We walked to the church next door to wrap the gifts because they had a big room for us to spread out. Volunteers from the church helped us wrap the presents. Our class wrapped over 45 presents all together! Wrapping the presents was really fun! It felt good to help someone else in need. We made a lot of kids smile on Christmas morning! The Muenchenburgey class truly had a day of giving!

Written by *Lindsey Chapman*



The students in **Ms. Thinner's Intermediate** class went to the YMCA of Middletown for the Day of Giving. Students were responsible for cleaning all the items in a storage closet. These items included: balls, wrestling mats, scooters, hula-hoops, and other gym materials. The students had to work cooperatively to pull the items from the closet, pass out cleaning supplies, and organize the materials when putting them back into the closet. The class had a discussion about how the items were not cleaned regularly and that by volunteering the students were helping fight illnesses, such as the passing of swine flu. The students appreciated the service opportunity and felt that they truly made a difference in the community by volunteering their time

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Mrs. Hodson's advisory spent the morning of the day of giving, cleaning, scrubbing, and sorting the art room at Central. Working like a crew, dividing tasks and successfully completing the list, we felt a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. *Samantha, Johnna and Bailey*, diligently scrubbed and rinsed the clay tools for over an hour. *Sam Corey, Ricky, Jacob, and Charles* moved boxes, sorted materials, and swept the art room. *Rachel* organized the construction paper and searched the room for a misplaced paper. *Raven* tackled the task of sharpening pencils and checking the markers to see if they were still useable. *Tyler* cleaned paintbrushes and trays. The most memorable part of the morning was when everyone was putting the final touches on wiping down the counters, sinks, and faucets. A faucet fell off, and water was gushing out of the pipe. The water got turned off, but we had a real mess on our hands that required yet another cleaning project.

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For this year's Day of Giving, **Kristi Joseph's** advisory did some much needed and greatly appreciated cleaning at Covenant Life Church. *Travis F., Kaleb L., Davey, and Asia* vacuumed the sanctuary, the children's building, and classrooms. **Kristi's** crew also helped put away props and decorations from the church's children's program, cleaned the glass windows of the classrooms and church office, and cleaned all of the church's folding chairs. Their work was a blessing to this church in our community and received many thanks and compliments from both the pastor and congregation.

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The Day of Giving was very exciting for the **Smith Advisory**. We volunteered at the Middletown Hope House. Since the students were older, we were allowed to cook lunch for the residents and then serve.

We were at the Hope House from 11am to 1 pm. The students were very excited to be serving. In fact, the students were asking when we could volunteer again and could they come in over the summer. We are already planning a trip back. Some of our tasks included straightening the supply room, checking expiration dates and putting away new donations. *Lydia, Angel F. and Kayla* were in charge of the vegetables for the day. *Carson, Brennan C. and Jonah* were in charge of making the fruit salad. *Robert and Dylan* put together fruit bags to give to residents to take with them. *Emily, Kayla and Angel F.* prepared desserts. The boys were in charge of the preparation of the ham for the day. The residents were very appreciative and interacted with the students pleasantly. What a great experience.



Everyone has something to give. **Mrs. Brubaker's** advisory learned this on their Day of Giving visit to Garden Manor. The students played checkers, Connect Four, and simply sat and talked with some of the residents. I was amazed at our Central Middle School student's patience, compassion and poise when dealing with some of the seniors' limited mental abilities, argumentative nature and lack of mobility. When we left, one of the patients told one of the boys "I love you." The student quietly told her "I love you." Some young pre-teen kids might have rolled their eyes, snickered, or been upset when interacting with these elderly citizens, but not our Central students! They took it all in their stride and felt proud of the time, attention and humanity they gave the residents of Garden Manor. The activity coordinator told them to come back any time and said that one of the patients never interacts with anyone. She was so pleased to see us reach this resident! I also discussed the possibility of having one or more of our students do an internship there in the future; and she was very receptive to the idea.

Being a part of a community should not be a passive activity. Hopefully, Central's Day of Giving is helping start a life-long habit in our students of giving back to their community throughout their childhood and adult life. Thanks to Mrs. Dickson for helping with transportation and helping model how to talk with the residences for our students.



On December 23, 2009 **Mrs. Carroll's advisory** went to Ritten House (formerly McKnight Terrace). The students debated a long time to decide where we would work. They wanted to do something that really made an impact on people, and also helped people who truly needed our help. *Ali* wanted to both help and perform for people at a nursing home and suggested McKnight Terrace.

Since it was her suggestion, *Ali* took on the leadership role by scheduling and planning rehearsal times for any student who could play an instrument or who would like to sing. *Julia* played the flute, *Virginia* played the violin, *Quinn* played the saxophone and *Ali* played the cello and clarinet. *Jonathon* and *Leta* helped them with singing. Their music included some pieces for fun and some music surrounding the holidays. The residents were extremely impressed that the students prepared everything on their own and truly enjoyed the performance just before they ate lunch.

While the one group was performing, two other groups helped with gifts for the residents. *Brett*, *Andrew J.*, *Ethan* and **Mr. Kyle** wrapped bows around gifts while *Stevie*, *Siera*, *Andrew R.* and *Mikey* made up bags of candy for about 75 people. This saved the Social Service Director hours of time, as we took under an hour to do about eight hours of work.



On December 23, 2009 **Mr. Perdue's advisory**, which included *Deanne R.*, *Jacob H.*, *Leah F.*, *Lillie B.*, *Paige P.*, *Kashley R.*, and *Grant M.*, went to Smith Park to pick up trash. Our advisory did a wonderful

job in the wet and cold conditions. These middle school students were amazed at how much trash was in the park and wondered why people do not take better care of such a nice park. They collected over seven full bags of trash. They went down to the banks of the pond and cleaned up as much trash as they could find in it to help the wildlife that lives in the water. They were very upset that the ducks and geese could be hurt or injured by the weather and amount of trash in their environment.

A maintenance man who worked at the park commented that they did a great job. A parent volunteer who helped chaperone the students was also impressed with their work. The students seemed to be very satisfied with their work, and they enjoyed helping out in the community. What an amazing group of kids who are so dedicated to making our world a cleaner place to live!