

## News release



Everett Public Schools

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### **Hawthorne students' holiday brightened by staff, community and business** ***Eight out of 10 Hawthorne student families are living at or below poverty level***

Hawthorne Elementary is well known for its welcoming family spirit and the activities that bring multigenerational families together to celebrate and to learn at after school and weekend events. What many of Hawthorne's families may not have in discretionary income, they do have in a culture of community and love of family and learning.

This spirit of an "educational family" includes Hawthorne's staff, local businesses and organizations. "It was important that our lowest income families, or approximately eight out of 10 of our students, went into winter break knowing that this school community values them and wishes them a bright holiday season," said Principal Janelle Phinney.

As a result, 433 students and siblings of Hawthorne's 505 students are recipients of everything from Safeway food cards to toys – all of them wrapped lovingly in paper, ribbons and bows donated and tied by staff and family volunteers.

Other district schools joined the project too. Mill Creek Elementary and H.M. Jackson High school students helped with collections. Also, the Elks Club, St. Vincent DePaul, Walgreen's Infusion and Respiratory Services (WIRS) and Bethany Christian donated money, gifts and time. Red Lobster also sponsored an entire family by providing gifts and food. Bethany Christian is a year-round Hawthorne partner – providing weekend backpacks for several of the Hawthorne families whose students depend weekdays upon the school's breakfast and lunch program. Walgreen's has adopted Hawthorne families for each of the last two years.

"We know that students who believe adults care about them have an advantage in school," explained Phinney. "We do care about each of our students at Hawthorne – about their home experiences and their school experiences. Helping a bit with their home holiday experiences is one way we can show how much we and the community care and how much we look forward to seeing them again when school resumes on Jan. 3, 2011."

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