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Almaden Country School seventh graders spearhead outreach effort

ACS students take initiative, raise more than \$2,000 to provide gifts for foster teens

Seventh graders at Almaden Country School completed fund-raising efforts Dec. 15 to buy holiday gifts for less fortunate teens living at Advent House, a home for foster kids in Santa Clara County. Unlike many fund-raisers that rely on donations, the Almaden Country School initiative was organized entirely by the seventh grade class and students at the school worked to earn the more than \$2,200 raised.

“We are very proud of the contribution our students have made to the community,” commented Steve Hayden, head of schools. “They felt it was important not only to reach out to other teens around the holidays, but also to earn the money themselves. All of the gifts provided truly came from the students.”

Advent House, the organization with which the students worked, provides group homes for teens still awaiting placement in foster homes. During the holiday season, each child served by Advent House creates a Holiday gift wish list. The seventh graders at Almaden Country School raised funds to provide the foster teens with items from their wish lists. “Most of the items on the list are things that you and I take for granted like bedspreads, socks, lotions, shoes, clothes, etc.,” said Dylan Hunter and Will Hayden, two of the seventh graders who helped organize this project.

The seventh grade class teamed up to promote the project in each classroom at Almaden Country School by making presentations to fellow students, creating posters, and writing letters. All the students at the school were challenged to earn money themselves by doing extra chores, donating some of their allowance, or offering to pet sit for a neighbor. Every class set a goal for the amount they hoped to contribute, some earning as much as \$275. The funds were then used to purchase items from each teen’s wish list. This year, more than

\$2,200 was collected and every teen at Advent House will receive something from his or her wish list, most getting several items. Additionally, over \$450 worth of gift cards were purchased for the house for movie tickets, restaurant trips, and food for a holiday party. The items were delivered this week.

When asked how they felt after completing the project, students Grace Hoffman and Demi Pace said, “we have really seen how privileged we are, and how good it can feel to give back.”



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