

Students send love to homeless children through teddy bears

By Nadine Wimmer

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AMERICAN FORK -- Students at American Heritage School in Utah County have been working hard the past few weeks to raise money.

It's a lesson they can't learn in the classroom: the true meaning of this holiday season.

Children aren't usually excited about doing chores, but these students jumped at the chance to do extra chores at home, all for a good cause.

"I think it's awesome and kind of cool that we are able to give to people who don't have so much," said seventh grader Nicole Curzon.

The students used that hard-earned chore money and purchased one teddy bear each to donate to the Ogden Rescue Mission.

"It was decided by the board of the homeless shelter, and Dr. and Mrs. Sager, that every child who came into the homeless shelter would receive a brand new teddy bear," said Laurie Updyke, a teacher at American Heritage School.



Kaylee Jensen, 6, gives two teddy bears a hug as she helps send off 540 toy bears to the Rescue Mission in Ogden Friday, Dec. 16, 2011. Students at American Heritage School in American Fork participate in a teddy bear donation for the rescue mission. (Photo: Stuart Johnson, Deseret News)



Paige Murdock 5, gives a teddy bear a big hug as she helps send off 540 toy bears to the Rescue Mission in Ogden Friday, Dec. 16, 2011. Students at American Heritage School in American Fork earned their own money to buy a teddy bear and then make long lines in the school and give each bear a hug and then box them up to send to the Rescue Mission. (Photo: Stuart Johnson, Deseret News)

But these aren't just regular bears. The children wanted to be sure that they teddy bears were well-loved, so they did just that: gave the toys special hugs before sending them off.

"Just kind of squeezing them and kind of giving them some love," one student explained.

"It's special," chimed in another.



Students at American Heritage School in American Fork participate in a teddy bear donation for the Rescue Mission in Ogden Friday, Dec. 16, 2011. Students earn their own money to buy a teddy bears and then make long lines in the school and pass each bear down the line to give each bear a hug and then box them up to send to the Rescue Mission. (Photo: Stuart Johnson, Deseret News)

The words of one student summed it all up:

"When you help other children with other things that you don't want to give away, but you really have to, you feel good inside that you have to give it away."

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