

Student artists create cards to make spirits bright



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ACUSHNET — A Thanksgiving stay at St. Luke's Hospital showed Michael Ferreira the joy a card from a child can bring to those hospitalized during the holiday season.

Inspired, he teamed up with the Acushnet school system for a greeting card service project involving the town's children.

Ferreira said that for several years he had taken part in the annual delivery of Thanksgiving meals, complimented by cards made by Acushnet Elementary School teacher Diane Boucher's Grade 3 class. That plan was disrupted about seven years ago when Ferreira had to be hospitalized during the holiday.

Ferreira's son, then a student in Boucher's class, asked him what they would do with the cards. Ferreira suggested sharing them with his fellow patients, and soon noticed the happiness on their faces when they received the greetings.

He decided that making cards for the hospital could become an annual event.

The cards are currently made by all students in second grade and above. Ford Middle School Art Teacher Kristine Daniels said they are definitely spirit-lifters.

"Imagine how tough it is to cheer up the patients" during the holidays, she said.

She said the students have been very enthusiastic, with many asking to bring paper home to make extra cards.

"It makes them feel good to do that for people," she said.

Daniels' class turned in a wide variety of cards, containing messages celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and the holiday season in general. They were decorated with pictures that included Santa Claus and snowmen.

Ferreira praised their enthusiasm, and Daniels for encouraging their creativity. "It comes from the heart," he said.

Daniels said the project has given students the opportunity to apply what they've been learning in her class. "It's a really great way to put their skills to use," she said.

Making the cards also teaches a valuable lesson about helping others. "They need something at this age to reach out to other people," she said.

In addition to the card program, Ferreira also runs a Salvation Army toy drive at the schools, collecting bags full of gifts. He said whenever he returns to the schools to pick up the bags, they are always full. "They're just really, really generous," he said.

Daniels said she hopes to continue the card-making tradition. "Hopefully we can keep doing this for a lot of years," she said.