Students help Goodfellows make the holidays brighter

By Mary Lou Song
STAFF WRITER

The Goodfellows got a bit of help from some little fellows — and fellowettes.

At a warehouse on Commerce Drive in Farmington Hills Thursday, 12 students from Kenbrook Elementary School helped volunteers from the Goodfellows Center organize goods for food and clothing baskets going to the needy during the holidays.

"We wanted them to get a better understanding about what happens to food once it has been collected and to know that its more than just collecting," said Sherry Sklar, a member of the Kenbrook PTA who helped organize the trip for the students.

The students sorted blue jeans and then toured the warehouse full of food, clothing and toys for Farmington-area families.

Earlier this fall, students at Kenbrook collected 20 boxes of canned goods and two boxes of games for the Goodfellows drive. Fifth grade teacher Donna Halter said that is double the amount collected last year.

Helping out: *Lauren Ouellette sorts jeans for the Goodfellows.*

"The student council thought we would get more if we had boxes in each classroom and the students could see the boxes filling," Halter said. "They were right."

The third, fourth and fifth graders who trekked to the Goodfellows Center last week said they were happy to know that their donations were going to help needy families.

"I like to help people who can't have food," said Sklar's son Ryan, 10, a fourth grader. "They need a lot and people die all over the place if they don't have food."

Goodfellows will deliver 170 boxes to families and 155 boxes to senior citizens in the area. Each box is tailored to the family or individual. Boxes to families will have canned goods, dry foods, clothing and toys for children. Boxes to senior citizens usually have food and toiletries. Families also receive vouchers from A&P and Kmart to buy fresh foods and other needed items.

The boxes go out of the warehouse and into homes on Dec. 19.

Durward Hester, a Goodfellows volunteer and Farmington resident, said delivering the boxes is a "heckuva job, but we've gotta get it done. We appreciate the help."

He said donations this year were down slightly, but there are always families in need.

"There are a lot of people that need help," he said. "We have almost the same ones every year, but this year we have a lot of people out of work."

Hester, a retired heavy equipment operator, has been a Good-fellows volunteer for 19 years. He said he volunteers because "I feel like people need help and it needs to be done. Somebody has to give them a hand."
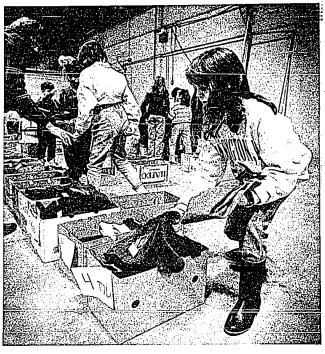
The children said they lend a hand for the same reason.

"We do it to help the poor people and give them clothes," said Jenna Street, 8. "I think you should do it all over the United States because there can be a lot of poor people in the winter who need food and clothes."

The third grader said she was having fun, too.

"We get to sort out jeans," Jenna said.

STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER

Good cause: *Troop members grab boxes that they'll use in sorting jeans.*

That's the spirit: *Lindsay Tiemeyer sorts jeans for the Goodfellows.*