



GOOSE CREEK

CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Sterling Band and Bowie First Grade Christmas Elves Bring Joy to Allenbrook Healthcare Residents

It is 11:15 a.m. on Friday, December 20, 2013. At Sterling High School the last school bell of 2013 rings to dismiss the students and teachers for a much needed and wanted break! As masses of bodies head for the parking lot, the Sterling Band students head to the Band Hall! They have one more gift to give before they start to think of themselves and their break!

For weeks they have been planning, counting, creating, and preparing for this special time of the year! Their sleighs (cars) are packed with lap blankets, scarves, goodie bags, and cookies for the staff. The Flight Schedule has been filed and the time has finally arrived! Their destination is Allenbrook Healthcare Center where they will be Christmas Elves for the residents and staff!

Each year under the guidance of Richard Clem, the Head Elf of the Sterling Band, they decide on a project as a way to give back to the community. In years past, they have traveled to Houston to feed the homeless, give out blankets and scarves to the people of the street, and provide items to the Star of Hope Mission. But this year it is Baytown's own Allenbrook Healthcare Center which was chosen to be the recipient of the gifts from these Christmas Elves!

The Sterling Band students have donated and collected money for their 4th Annual Christmas Project! During their annual Christmas party, the Sterling Band students made lap blankets and scarves from fleece, decorated paper sacks for goodie bags, as well as listened to music, consumed goodies, and enjoyed the friendship of their band family. For three hours these soon to be Christmas Elves worked diligently in their workshop (the Band Hall) to prepare all the items needed to bring a smile, a little joy, and some excitement to the Allenbrook residents.

All the while, at Bowie Elementary, Mrs. Jennifer Wood's Kindergarten students were also working! They were collecting personal items to be given to the residents. They collected bags and bags of lotion, soap, lip gloss, shampoo, conditioner and other personal items to be added to the ones which were collected by the band students.

Finally the big day has arrived and there is excitement in the air – not about exams, but about bringing joy to the senior citizens of our community. A large group of elves worked to fill goodie bags with candy and personal items while another group filled bags with cookies for the staff.

As the Elves caravanned to Allenbrook, the residents were eagerly awaiting their arrival. As the sleighs (cars) pulled into the drive, eyes began to light up, smiles spread across faces, and hands clapped at the sight of 25 Santa hats which disembarked the sleighs and headed to the door with sacks and sacks of goodies for everyone.

The Christmas Elves went straight to their work. While many set up music stands and instruments to begin the concert, others began to unpack the bags of goodies. As the music drifted down the halls, the residents filled the dining room to clap, sing, hum, and pat their feet to the Christmas carols. They waited with anticipation for their turn to choose a lap blanket, scarf, and goodie bag. Sterling Band parents, siblings, and other members of the band family greeted the residents with a smile and gentle word while passing out the goodies.

At the end of their time together, Sharon St. Brice, Director of Activities at Allenbrook Healthcare had this to say about the Christmas Elves and their visit. "The reaching out to the community by the Sterling Band has shown me that today's youth and our senior adults can come together to share the gift of giving and receiving. While the residents enjoyed listening to the music, the band enjoyed playing for them. While the band enjoyed making the gifts, the residents enjoyed knowing they had not been forgotten by others. It has shown that today's youth can bring a positive spirit of giving back to the community."

As the Christmas Elves gathered their belongings back into their sleighs, the residents waved and wished all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Little did the residents know that they had changed the feelings of these students from just thinking about themselves to truly thinking about others and how they had brought joy to the lives of our senior adults!

Once again, the Sterling Band students found that Christmas is not tied up with ribbons and bows, but is found in the hearts of themselves and others!

Submitted by Brenda J. Clem, Assistant Head Elf

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