

## **Christmas with Social Services**

### **By Tyrone Holmes**

#### **Best Practice 1: Meet a recognized need in the community**

Students work with the local Department of Social Services to provide a brighter Christmas for less fortunate children in Caroline County. This program involves 80% of the total school population with 50 students directly involved. This past year 83 children were adopted.

#### **Best Practice 2: Achieve curricular objectives through service-learning**

Students used organizational, communication, accounting, financial planning, and teamwork skills to carry out this project.

#### **Best Practice 3: Reflect throughout the service-learning experience**

Students discussed the impact this project had on their community and how it affected them.

#### **Best Practice 4: Develop student responsibility**

Lead students contact the Department of Social Services to solicit the names of perspective families and children to receive gifts. Students then take those names and conduct a toy and gift drive throughout the entire school, making contact with each homeroom to assure that every child is adopted.

#### **Best Practice 5: Establish community partnerships**

Students worked with the local Department of Social Services.

#### **Best Practice 6: Plan ahead for service-learning**

Each homeroom representative explains and reviews the program with their individual homerooms. The next step of the program is to assure that all selected children receive gifts. Each homeroom representative periodically checks the status of gifts or funds for gifts. On the final days of the program students set up an appointment to have gifts to be picked up at the high school. Once the date and time are set, students gather and collate all gifts assuring that all are assigned and placed in large shopping bags for pick-up. Students then help prepare and load gifts.

#### **Best Practice 7: Equip students with knowledge and skills needed for service**

Students learned about the Caroline County Department of Social Services and who is served by this government agency. They also learned about how some people and families struggle financially and the difficult choices that creates for those individuals.

