

EUGENE J. BUTLER MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Dear Bright Holidays Family,

Sometimes it is difficult to put into words the impact of kindness and sacrifice for others. Many of our families have trouble trying to articulate how they feel about the giving of people they do not know. In an effort to make an attempt to share with the donors as many reflections as we could, we decided to have a roundtable discussion with our students and their family members to capture a glimpse of just how **Bright** their **Holidays** were because of you. Try to “sit at the table” in your mind to hear what they had to say:

- Ahseiyim was baffled that someone who did not know her would choose **“new clothes that really look good on me!”** She is very shy and we were thrilled that she wanted to show her gratitude.
- Enaffit is a Haitian student who simply could not stop smiling. She asked if she could give out gifts to other students as she was one of the first to receive her gifts. **“I want to learn how to give stuff since I never had anything to give.”** She was amazing at delivering and celebrating the joy of others. **“Now I understand! This feels great!”** She did not open one gift until all the others had been delivered.
- Anya was unable to speak for a while. She has been homeless ever since she has attended our school. She will move on to high school next year and stated that, **“No one can ever take away my memories...even if I never get another gift. Just look at this...”** Mama tearfully shared that she could not believe her child was loved three years in a row by Bright Holidays Angels.
- Denard is an exceptional education student and he is usually non-verbal. He jumped up and down and ran around the table. I asked him to settle down and his response was, **“I can’t...I have new shoes just for me!”** His grandmother shared that they were his first that were not hand-me-downs.
- Vicky was overwhelmed and asked if she could leave her gifts at school and change. When asked why, her answer was, **“At the group home, they might disappear.”** We made arrangements.
- Three brothers were absolutely shocked to be chosen. They already decided how to share the gifts one of them might receive. When the bags were unloaded and there were three of them, the screaming began, **“All of us? No**

way! Oh, my God...that is unreal. I can't believe it! We are so lucky!" Mom corrected them quickly and stated, **"That is no luck, son...we are blessed!"**

- There are many more, but each year, one always stands out and this year it was Jason and his Mom. When we arrived at his home, both of them were waiting and were very nervous. We unloaded the bags and when Mom saw the coat and the sleeping bag, she fell to the floor in tears. I helped her up and she held me so tightly that I could not move. She wept and kept asking, **"Why?...Why would somebody do this? I can't write a note, so what can I do? My baby has a new coat!"** Jason put his arms around her to calm her, looked at me with tears in his eyes and said, **"You were right Dr. J.....it's still some good people and now my Mama won't have to keep me home when I miss the bus. I can walk and be warm....thank you...I just thank you."**

These words are examples of the gratitude of our students and their parents. They represent the sentiments of the other students and parents. I will never be able to fully explain the impact of true, sacrificial giving. Should we be so blessed again, we must videotape the deliveries and expressions so you can experience the joy of seeing the faces of the recipients of this blessed ministry.

I love you and thank you more than you can possibly know. Blessed children learn better!

Sylvia