



Responsibility

Mandarin Middle School

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Bright Holidays has done so much to make the holidays joyful for a number of students at Mandarin Middle School. Students are identified by their classroom teachers, based on their observation of need. We also ask for demonstrated good citizenship and hard work in classes. In the years since they have adopted us, a number of deserving children have had much happier times during the holidays.

Middle school is a time when "fitting in" is so important. When many families in our community have incomes to afford the current status symbol, whatever it may be, it's hard when your family can't. I asked Bright Holidays to purchase one of those items for a needy student. I asked for the smallest item, an ID case. The shopper went above and beyond, getting the student the purse as well. She was so proud when she returned from the vacation. As they mature, they hopefully find that there is much more to life than whatever is "in", but at 13 it is dreadfully important.

This year a brother and sister were nominated to receive gifts. When the mother came to pick them up, she burst into tears. She told us that, without these gifts, her family would have had no Christmas. The mother died in February. What wonderful memories these children will have of the last Christmas with their mother.

Currently we have several children receiving lunches because of Bright Holidays. We set up Mylunchmoney.com accounts for them and Bright Holidays funds these accounts. While some of these students might have qualified for free lunches, several told their teachers they were too embarrassed to apply for the program. It's very different now because they "won" these lunches by being good students.

Bright Holidays brightens the season for the adults as well. I see teachers cry when their students receive these gifts. I have the best job in the world when I get to play Santa and hand the gifts out to the children. One student looked in the bag and asked if she got to choose one present. She was thrilled when she discovered they were all for her. Her mother had recently passed away and Dad was having trouble coping with Christmas.

Thank you for all you do for us at Mandarin Middle School.

Yours truly,
Joy Recla
Principal