

Press Clippings 11/19/2021

---Daily Herald-- 11/19/2021

Foundation hopes to make 'Christmas Wishes' come true for 250 Elgin-area kids

By Rick West

A happier holiday could be on the horizon for 250 Elgin-area kids with the Wisdom Family Foundation Christmas Wishes program.

The program in its third year connects volunteer donors with kids and families in need from Elgin, South Elgin and St. Charles.

"We're excited to be doing this again," said foundation Executive Director Heather Kirsebom. "It's one of our biggest initiatives at the foundation and one of the most impactful things we do."

The kids get to pick one "wish" item, such as a toy or game, and one "need," such as clothing, shoes, books or winter gear. Donors spend about \$100 total per child and can write a letter or note to include with their gifts. The foundation donates a \$50 grocery gift card to the family for a holiday meal.

Last year's program provided gifts for 200 area kids.

"We hope we can keep growing every year so we can impact even more families," Kirsebom said. "Every year we're finding more families in need."

The foundation worked with the Boys & Girls Club of Elgin and Project Access to identify kids who otherwise might not receive anything for the holidays. **Project Access is School District U-46's Homeless Education Program.** The 250 kids are from 78 families in the area.

After getting the kids' names, ages and wish lists, donors will be able to deliver the gifts directly to the families or meet them at the Boys & Girls Club.

"The stories we hear at the end of each campaign remind us how transformational this initiative has proved to be -- for both the family receiving, and the individual giving," foundation President Kristi Wisdom said.

People interested in becoming donors or learning more can go to www.wisdomfamilyfoundation.org/christmas-wishes.

The Wisdom Family Foundation was started by Jeff and Kristi Wisdom in 2007. They have annually provided scholarships to U-46 students for the past 15 years and are strong supporters of the Boys & Girls Club of Elgin, including a \$1 million donation toward establishing a new clubhouse in South Elgin. They are also a founding partner of Fostering Success, a nonprofit dedicated to connecting youths in the foster care system with local mentors.

"We try to do projects that have a ripple effect," Kirsebom said. "At the end of the day, the goal is to make a more impactful community and to continue to foster a place of generosity and opportunity for everyone."