



Santa's helpers



Peter Casolino/Register

At High Road School in Wallingford, special education students, from front to rear; Jason Lareau, 15, Danielle Colon, 13, and Michael O'Conner, 14, help teachers Stacey Pinto, left, and Rosemary Schaeffer, center rear, load toys Monday that they bought to take to children at the Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital. The students at the school raised \$800 through various fundraisers to buy toys for the children at the hospital.

High Road School has 1st toy drive

\$700 in gifts will go to New Haven cancer patients

By Jeffery Kurz
Record-Journal staff

WALLINGFORD — It started out in Angela Price's class of eighth and ninth-graders. The idea was to guess how many M&Ms were in a candy jar. You paid 50 cents a guess (the answer was 521).

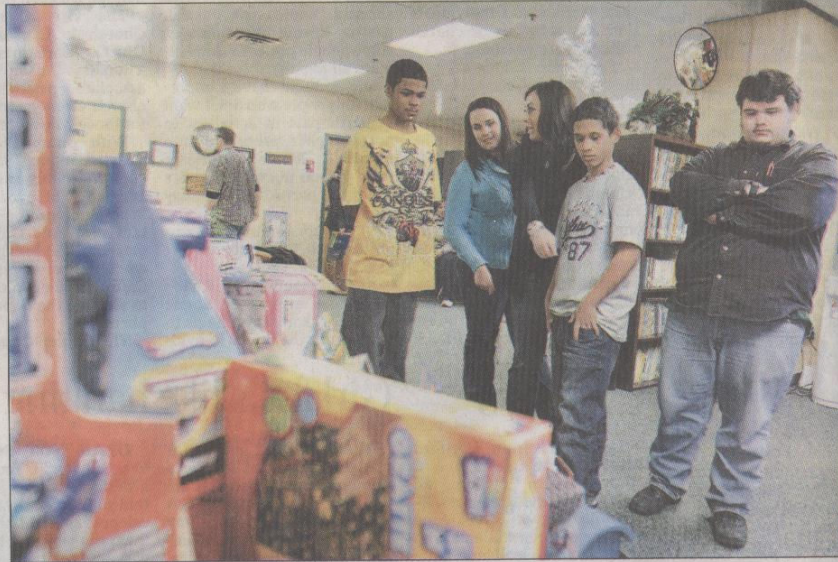
The class of seven students raised \$50 that way, but more importantly the effort proved infectious. Pretty soon everyone at the High Road School of Wallingford was participating, with each class coming up with a different, creative way of raising money.

All told, about \$700 was raised. Then the classes fanned out to nearby Wal-Mart and Toys R Us, gathering up toys.

On Monday, the toys will be presented to the Smilow Cancer Center, in New Haven, in the hope that they'll help brighten the holidays for children with cancer.

"I love that it's not about receiving, it's about giving," said Angel Santana,

Please see **Toys / 14**



Photos by Matt Andrew / Record-Journal

Eighth- and ninth-grade teacher Angela Price, center, points to a pile of toys Friday at High Road School in Wallingford. Students raised \$700 for its first toy drive for patients at the Smilow Cancer Center in New Haven. From left are Victor Guadalupe, 17, 10th-grade teacher Lynn Majewski, Price, Angel Santana, 14, and Shawn Jones, 19.



□ Toys

a 14-year-old from Hartford who is in Price's class.

Along with raising the money and buying the toys, 17-year-old Victor Guadalupe was one of three students who spent about a week building a pine-wood toy chest.

"I want them to enjoy it," he said.

The High Road School is one of four schools in a Village Lane complex. The schools, which started in 1977 and moved to Village Lane in the mid-1980s, serve students with learning, behavioral, language and emotional challenges. There are 36 students at the High Road School. They're referred from school districts throughout the state. The schools also offer a school-to-work transition program for 18- to 21-year-olds.

"A lot of them come from not the best circumstances," said Stacey Pinto, admissions director. "So the gift of giving for the holiday season is a valuable lesson."

The gift of giving includes X-Box games, Monopoly, Transformers, arts and crafts, and Play Doh. Smilow supplied a wish list.

It's the first time the school has done such a thing, Price said. It was just supposed to be a little project for her class, she said, but then it turned into a lot more.

"It took on a life of its own," she said. "The kids are so into it — doing something for somebody else."

The valuable lesson, she said, was to "never forget what the holiday season is really for."

Jennifer Legere's class of 11th- and 12th-graders raised about \$300 selling cookies and hot chocolate. It was a happy experience, said Shawn Jones, a 19-year-old from Meriden who is in Legere's class. Jones plans to go on to culinary school.

Richard Zucchetto's 10th-grade class raised \$179 selling cupcakes, which proved so popular they ran out of them.

"The kids were so cooperative and motivated to give their time," he said. "I was really proud of them."