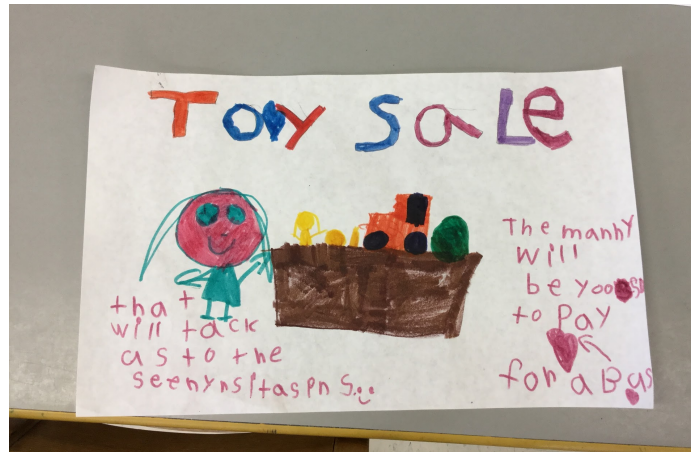


Kensington Elementary School

Two of our core values at Kensington Elementary School are **kindness** and **empathy**. Recently, our Kindergarten, First Grade, and Second Grade students embarked on a journey which embraced both of those characteristics. Driven by the questions, “How can we make a positive difference in our community with our senior citizens?” and “How can we make everyone feel important in our community?”, our students visited Rockingham Assisted Living in Brentwood, NH.

This was not your ordinary field trip, however. Usually, teachers would coordinate, organize and plan the day. This time, the students were in charge of planning their visit from beginning to end. Working in collaborative cross-grade level groups, they wrote letters to our Superintendent asking permission to take a field trip, they worked with our school secretary to develop a permission slip to send home to their parents, they requested and reserved a bus from First Student, and they coordinated activities with the Director of Rockingham Assisted Living to ensure the seniors would be ready for our visit. Students even organized a Toy Sale during lunchtime at KES to raise the \$133 they needed to pay for the bus for their field trip. Once the logistics were in place, there was still much preparation for students if they were going to make a positive difference with our seniors.



When students arrived to the nursing home that chilly morning, they were eager to perform several songs that they hoped this older generation would appreciate. They began by singing “I’ve Been Working on the Railroad”, “Take Me Out to the Ballgame”, and “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” and immediately the seniors began to sing along and the room was filled with smiles and tears. Students then presented the seniors with cards and Valentines and spent a few minutes talking with them about the songs.



To end the morning, students interviewed the seniors citizens by asking them questions about their childhood, families and interests. Interviews were recorded by our 1st and 2nd graders and senior portraits were lovingly drawn by our kindergarten students. As we left that morning, many of our new senior friends were asking when we would be visiting again. When we returned to school, students reflected on the day and here are some of the things they wrote, "We brought back their memories and we made them happy." "We made them less lonely." "We sang songs that they sang when they were a kid." "We interviewed them and asked them things about their life and made them really happy and warm inside." Our students had a goal that day of making the senior citizens feel important and I would agree that they did. Mission accomplished.