

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Santa Visits Akron School

Written by Chris Keppler at AkronNewsNow.com

(Akron, OH – December 22, 2011) – The last day of school in December ranks second only to the last day of school in June to many students. This “last day,” however, might be even better for students at Firestone Park Elementary School.

When you hear Santa Claus’ bells jingling and the familiar, “Ho, ho, ho,” echoing through the hallways of the old school building, how can it be anything but good?

It got better.

All 401 students were surprised with gift bags containing books and candy, plus a pizza party for every classroom. Santa had a little help from GPD Group, an architectural firm headquartered in Akron.

“We enjoy doing it,” said GPD Executive Vice President Darrin Kotecki. “The kids are real appreciative and I think our employees get more out of it than the kids.”

The holiday project is hardly a one-time offering. Kotecki says about 25 employees volunteer at the school each week as part of the AkronReads program. From that, they developed a relationship that has resulted in the company making purchases for the school, including \$19,000 worth of multi-media equipment.

The effort doesn’t go unnoticed.

“It’s all about giving and teaching kids how to give and receive and be thankful,” said Firestone Park Elementary School Principal Joan Thompson, who acknowledges that the gifts handed out today may be the only ones received by some of the students.

Thompson says parents are very involved in the school and believes that their support plus the additional community involvement helps build confidence that’s easily measured by student achievement.

Speaking of surprises, Thompson says teachers were astonished to receive gift bags as well – each containing a present and a \$100 gift card.

To view the original news article, [click here](#).

GPD Group, located in Akron, Cleveland, Columbus and Youngstown, Ohio, Atlanta, Georgia; Indianapolis, Indiana; Louisville, Kentucky; Phoenix, Arizona; and Seattle, Washington is a professional services firm that specializes in engineering and architectural disciplines for diverse markets that include community facilities, education, housing, parks and recreation, power distribution, public works, retail commercial, site development, telecommunications, transportation and wireless systems. For more information about GPD Group, visit them on-line at www.gpdgroup.com or call toll free at 1-800-955-4761, Ext. 595.

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