

KRQE News 13 – Aaron Drawhorn: December 17, 2014

ALBUQUERQUE (KRQE) - A longstanding holiday tradition continued Wednesday at Wherry Elementary School with students receiving a special handmade wooden toy. The Albuquerque Woodworkers Association has partnered with schools to provide toys to disadvantaged New Mexico families.

“It’s a good feeling when you see that kid smile. It makes it worth everything,” said Tracy Murray, president of the Albuquerque Woodworkers Association.

Wooden cars, trucks, whales, birds, and doll beds with a doll and quilt are given to students. They don’t need batteries, and they don’t come with an instruction manual. But these toys are extra special because they are produced with quality craftsmanship in APS woodshop classes.

Originally partnered with Valley High School more than 25 years ago, the Albuquerque Woodworkers Association has also expanded the program to Eldorado, Highland, Manzano and West Mesa High Schools.

“To date we’ve produced about 40,000 toys,” said Murray. “It’s amazing how high the quality is. If you look at this, it’s a very nice toy. It’s very durable. It will last forever,” he said.

This year, however, the program was in jeopardy of going away because funds dried up. Holman’s USA stepped up to cover the costs.

“Without the money, it would not have happened today, so Holman’s USA stepped up to the plate, and we donated a total of \$6,000 to save the program,” said Anthony Trujillo, president of Holman’s USA. “We’re big advocates for giving back to the community. We’ve been blessed, a very successful business, and we’d love to share that with our community,” he said.

“To bring a traditional toy, like a handmade wood toy, is unheard nowadays, so it’s a real pleasure to distribute these out to the children in our community,” Trujillo said.

Students expressed their gratitude.

“My doll was so cute, and she was so happy because she likes me,” said Brianna, a student at Wherry.

“I love it,” said, Noah, who received a car.

APS said in addition to the 530 toys given out at Wherry Elementary, toys also were given to Adobe Acres Elementary and to homeless students. In all, more than 2,000 students received wooden toys this year.

The Piñon Quilters and Tumbleweed Quilters provided dolls and quilts for the doll beds.



