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Letters from the Heart

Coarsegold Elementary School students write thank you letters to staff.

By [Jenna Nielsen](#)

(Updated Wednesday, February 15, 2006, 7:41 PM)

Even though more than 3,000 letters have been written, students at Coarsegold Elementary School still want to write more.

They write the letters at lunch time, before school, after school and during recess.

They've written letters to teachers, bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers and staff members.

They write the letters to say "thank you, you really helped me out", and "I appreciate everything you have done and do for me."



Friends Jordan Nava, 11, and Hank Haanen, 13, have written the most letters to Coarsegold Elementary staff. "I think I have written close to 60, but I don't know because I lost count," Hank said.
Photos By Jenna Nielsen

The students started writing the letters Monday, Jan. 30 to express their gratitude to staff members at the school.

"To some of these students their teachers are everything to them," said Robin Jacks, the librarian at the school who initiated the letter writing campaign. "The students have written so many letters we have lost count," she said. "And every single staff member has received not just one, but more than one letter."

Jacks started the letters of gratitude campaign after one of the students at the school became very sick.

"I would have the kids come in and read them a book," Jacks said. "I thought after the student became very ill, we would write letters of gratitude to staff instead."

Jacks said at the end of the first 30 minutes, the 28 students in the room had written 367 letters.

"This is just amazing," she said. "It is incredible that they do this."

The staff members did not see the letters until Jacks and the students presented them on Valentine's Day.

"I wanted to write letters to all my teachers because they have been my friends and I wanted to thank them," said Allison Boyer, 9.

Alison and her friend, Eirena Ewert, 9, started writing letters to all the staff beginning at the letter "z" on the school's staff list and worked their way up.

"We got half way up the list," she said.

Principal approval

Principal Randy Haggard is very pleased with all the letters students have written and the encouragement Jacks has provided to the kids.

"This project really took on a life of its own," Haggard said. "Robin has really done an incredible job making our library a place that kids are happy to be and excited about going into."

Hank Haanen, 13, was one of the students who wrote the most letters. He said he lost count, but thinks he wrote close to 60.



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"I wanted to write the letters to my teachers because my teachers have helped me," Hank said.

Jacks said she is amazed at the response kids have shown in writing the letters.

"I couldn't have done it without these students," she said. "They are the ones writing all the letters."

Jacks said writing them quickly became a group activity among the kids.

"They have missed their lunches and recesses to come in and write all these letters," she said.

Two students, Christina Kieffer, 9, and Destiny Anger, 10, were the two responsible for filing all the letters and putting them in alphabetical order.

"The two of them have been great," Jacks said. "They have spent a lot of their own time in here filing all the letters and have never complained once."

A lot of the students like MaKenna Hunziker, 8, starting writing letters themselves and then asked some of their friends to get involved.

"I wrote letters to all the teachers I had because they were always nice to me and helped me," MaKenna said. "I asked my friends if they would like to write with me and they came in at recess to help."

The students at the school aren't just excited about writing the letters, they are excited about going to the library and reading books too.

"Everyday we are packed," Jacks said. "I re-shelf between 300 and 500 books a day."

Jacks is just as excited about the kids as they are about her.

"This is such a great job," Jacks said. "If there was a job you would be excited about and happy to come to every single day, this is it."



A lot of students came in the library on their own time to write the letters. MaKenna Hunziker, 8, said she wrote 10 letters and went in the library during recess with her friends to write them.
Photos By Jenna Nielsen



Librarian Robin Jacks has become overwhelmed with the amount of letters students have written so far. She said she has lost count at 3,000.

Photos By Jenna Nielsen



Students in all grade levels have written enough letters that every staff member at Coarsegold Elementary has received more than one letter. Jacks and the students decided to present the staff with the letters on Valentine's Day. "A lot of the staff didn't even know they would be getting letters," Jacks said.

Photos By Jenna Nielsen



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