

Real estate agency provides shoes for needy kids



Ed Reed and Sharon Vaughn, broker associates at Coldwell Banker, sort through bags of new clothes and shoes to be given to needy students at Nisley Elementary School.

By Richie Ann Ashcraft

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For the past eight years, the brokers and staff at Coldwell Banker have quietly bought shoes, pants, and shirts for needy kids at Nisley Elementary.

Twice a year the brokers are given names of nearly 100 children whose parents aren't able to afford clothing for their children. The kids are identified by the school and allowed to make a request of their three most needed items.

In return the brokers receive heartfelt thank-you letters from the children. In the letters the children often reveal a lot about their circumstances citing broken homes, parents who have lost their jobs, and other unfortunate circumstances.

"The teachers have told us how amazed they are that it changes the children's confidence level," said Sharon Vaughn, broker associate and organizer of the program at Coldwell Banker.

The program, "Shoes That Fit," is a national program aimed at building students' self esteem through clothing donations. Just having the basic necessities allow children to focus on their school work and not their particular circumstances at home. That is the primary goal of the organization.

"There's so much peer pressure at that age and this makes it so they don't stand out as much," said Ed Reed, broker associate.

Often the brokers go a little wild, adding extra outfits and toys to the boxes.

Vaughn said the demand for new clothes is higher in the fall than in the summer, and more expensive since the children need coats, boots and jeans.

Other businesses have stepped up to help including Wells Fargo Bank, Fidelity Mortgage, Abstract Title Company and Cherry Creek Mortgage.

"The thank-you notes we receive are really touching," Vaughn said, "It just makes us feel good."