

## JPII STUDENTS TAKE TO THE SIDEWALKS TO SHOVEL SNOW

When you wake up in the morning to see a fresh layer of snow blanketing the ground, many people want to just get right back into bed, and not think about the long winter ahead and having to shovel snow for the next few months. But that's not the case for students in Stony Plain. The snow gets the students of John Paul II Catholic School excited.

For the second straight year, JPII junior high students who are calling themselves the Snow Angels, are heading out into the cold to shovel snow for residents who live near the school.

"It's a great way to give back and the students really enjoy doing it for their community," said JPII teacher Brenda Dew.

Last year, the school received shovels as donations from the local Co-op, Home Depot and parents, so students could get down to work. It was a project started for the school's Advent Conspiracy, a project to help bring back the true meaning of Christmas. This year, they're excited to do the project again.

"I think the students actually look forward to the snow and there will be many more snowfalls to come," Dew said. "It's a way that students can give back to the community. It's also a way that our students can put into practice what Christ asks of us – to help others. It's a great way for the students to put into practice what they are taught."

So far, the project has been very rewarding. Many residents have expressed their gratitude to the students, which is an added benefit.

After clearing driveways and sidewalks, students are treated with hot

chocolate when the return to the school, which Dew says is a little treat for all their hard work. ■



## HOLY SPIRIT SPREADS CHRISTMAS SPIRIT TO MEXICO

Christmas will be very special this year in the town of Santa Claire, Mexico, where 170 shoe boxes are en route to from Devon. The shoe boxes were loaded with toys and other gifts for children who range in age from two years old to 14 years old.

The shipment of shoe boxes was a project hosted by Holy Spirit Catholic School. Families of students were asked to donate what they could and the response was great.

"We were able to brighten up the lives of those that are less fortunate and warm our own hearts as

well," said Principal Steve Dempsey. "We asked families to give and help out for this positive initiative and the response was outstanding."

Santa Claire is a small community of 200 to 300 people that are in desperate need of help. Families there are very poor and their only income comes from making clay bricks in wood-burning ovens. The children there who do go to school are bused and they have to meet the bus at 6 a.m. In most cases these families are too poor to feed their children breakfast. The only meal they receive is one hot meal at school each day. ■



## ST. JOSEPH STUDENT TEACHERS AIM TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Three student teachers at St. Joseph School are hoping to make Christmas a little brighter for members of the community this year.

The teachers have started a two-part project in the school. The first part of the project is centered around a large star that has been placed in the gym, symbolizing the journey of the three wise men. It was placed during the first week of Advent and its purpose is to encourage students to write on small stars, with their own personal Advent prayers.

"It has been really well received," said Principal Ray Renaud. "It has been a way for our whole school to contribute and think about things they can pray for."

The second part of the project is collecting baby items for the Kids Cottage Foundation. Students,

parents and members of the community have been steadily donating things like new and used clothes, formula and diapers, which are then passed on to the Foundation. Kids Cottage is an organization that helps parents and families who don't have the means to make ends meet. They provide donations to the families as well as help families who are in crisis.

"The parents and our school community have really picked up on this and it's been great," said Renaud. "We've had a huge response, with lots of things coming in."

The student teachers, who are students at the University of Alberta, Katelyn LaPlante, Mariah Lightening and Amy Suggitt, all said they were very proud of their project and excited by how well the community responded. ■

