

## KIPP Receives Holiday Gifts from Community

**Globe Staff**

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[KIPP Academy Lynn](#) (KAL) announced that many Lynn, Marblehead and Swampscott families and businesses have generously donated in-kind gifts to help KAL families celebrate the holiday season. For multiple years now, local individuals and businesses have stepped up to give KAL families both the necessities and the extras some of them may not otherwise have around the holidays.

For four years and counting, a group of Marblehead and Swampscott women led by Mary Abramson, who call themselves the "The Basket Babes," have gathered together to assemble and deliver more than 100 baskets full of goodies for KAL families. Mary, co-owner of Sundancers Restaurant in West Dennis, reaches out to her clients and friends to donate the gifts, and then recruits volunteers to help assemble and deliver the baskets sure all the families receive the gift baskets the week before Christmas. On December 16th, the women delivered 120 colorfully wrapped baskets to KAL. The baskets, filled with everything from perfume to electric shavers to stuffed animals, brought smiles to many KIPPsters' faces.



**KIPPsters happily display their holiday baskets**

Also a yearly presence at KAL during the holiday season is Old Neighborhood Foods of Lynn, owned and operated by Swampscott resident Tom Demakes (whose wife Peachie is also one of the Basket Babes). Old Neighborhood Foods donates a 10-pound box of meat for every family at KAL, to ensure they have a holiday dinner (and more) on their tables. Many 6th - 8th grade KIPPsters who received the meat last year were looking forward to receiving the gift again this year from the person to whom they affectionately refer as "the meat man."

General Electric, an organization that has been a part of the Lynn business community for decades, has also been part of the KAL community for many years. On behalf of GE, Ron Hutter, Vice President of Sales at GE, has organized volunteers to chaperone field trips, welcomed KIPPsters to tour the GE plant, and, with others, consulted on the building of KAL's 7th grad science lab. This year as in years past, GE has helped KIPPsters by organizing an electric blanket drive, and/or providing the funds for KAL to purchase the blankets that many families need to keep warm during the cold New England winter.

The Community of Friends, a volunteer-based charitable organization located in Marblehead and run by John Wilder, donated nearly 100 stockings stuffed with holiday presents for KAL families. The stockings were delivered directly to the families by KAL "elf" teachers during the first weekend of winter break.

"With friends like Tom, Peachie, Mary, Ron and John, we know our KIPPsters and their families have more of what they need to climb the mountain to and through college, in addition to what our teachers

do in the classroom every day," said Josh Zoia, Executive Director of KIPP Academy Lynn. "They understand that 'it takes a village' and we are very grateful to them for their incredible generosity."

### **About KIPP Academy Lynn**

KIPP Academy Lynn (KAL) is a free, open-enrollment public charter school serving students 375 students in grades 5 - 8. The school is part of a national network of 99 schools located in 20 states and the District of Columbia and serving more than 26,000 students. More than 87% of KAL students live at or below the poverty line, and more than 80% are African American or Latino. KAL's mission is to create an environment where students will develop the academic skills, intellectual habits, and character traits necessary to maximize their potential in high school, college, and the world beyond.