



**ROMEO
COMMUNITY
SCHOOLS**

GOOD NEWS ACROSS 'R' DISTRICT

December 11, 2023



Nora Weekhout announced that she wanted to give Santa a hug but before she did, she let him in on a secret – what she wants for Christmas this year.

Breakfast with Santa

It's such a long-standing tradition that Santa Claus marks it on his calendar well in advance. Each December he makes it a priority to hitch up his sleigh and head from the North Pole to Romeo for a special visit with the children of Crowell Early Childhood Center. Breakfast with Santa took place this year on December 6.

Santa has been the honored guest of the Romeo Area Kiwanis Club for as long as Henry Malburg, the longest standing member, can remember – and he joined in 1984. Partnering with Romeo Community Schools' Food Service group, Kiwanis board members provided breakfast to all the children, with Romeo High School students from SERVE and Romeo Middle School students from the Builders Club serving as Santa's helpers.

SERVE, Romeo High School's community service organization, stands for Students Enriching Romeo through Volunteer Experiences. The Builders Club is a student-led service club modeled after Kiwanis International, but geared for middle-schoolers to help them develop leadership skills through service to their school and community. Board member Chuck Brennecke

introduced the Builders Club to Romeo middle school students in 1999 when he served as president.

In addition to a pancake breakfast, the children enjoyed crafts, games, and a gift bag, a tradition past president Henry Malburg started in 1984. Each bag includes an orange, two apples, a snack, a juice box and books.



While originally he assembled bags for 25 kids, that number has grown over the years to over 200, Mr. Malburg said, adding he is grateful for the generosity and support of local businesses like Verellen Orchards, which provides the half-peck paper bags with handles along with four bushels of apples, and Sheena's Marketplace, which even helped assemble the bags this year.

Of course, the highlight of the morning was the highly anticipated visit with Santa.

Chuck Brennecke offered a tip: "The best place to stand is right behind Santa, where you can see the children's faces."



Pictured with Santa, from left, are Kiwanis board members Tom Siracoff, Chuck Brennecke, Kathy Wojcik (president), Henry Malburg, Lisa Imbrunnone and Caity Marsh.