

## PRESS RELEASE

April 9, 2009

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**Mike Veltman**, Norton Shores Meijer Store Manager, 231-739-9381  
**Phyllis Williams**, Muskegon Rescue Mission, 231-727-6090 Cell: 231-301-4264

**Schedule:** **Friday, April 17, 2009 – Call 231-750-9298 for On-Site Contact**  
9:30 a.m. Students exit bus at Norton Shores Meijer (700 W. Norton)  
9:35 a.m. Students receive check, read essay, and sing. Students begin shopping, filling carts, calculating costs, and checking out  
10:45 a.m. Students load truck, board busses, and travel to Muskegon Rescue Mission Men’s Shelter (400 Laketon Avenue) to deliver food items and stock shelves  
**11:00 a.m. Students form “fireman’s line” to pass food items person to person until the entire truck is unloaded onto the pantry shelves.**

### **Third graders read 43,500 minutes to earn \$2,800; shop for groceries, stock local pantry**

On **Friday, April 17, 2009**, at 9:30 a.m., 44 third grade students from Reeths-Puffer’s Twin Lake Elementary will arrive at the Meijer Inc. store located at 700 W. Norton Avenue in Norton Shores to receive and spend a check they earned by reading. In February Meijer Inc. personnel came to the school and challenged the students to read a combined total of 20,000 minutes outside of the school day during the 31 days of March. The reward: \$1,000 to be spent on food items to fill a local pantry. The students not only surpassed the goal by reading 43,500 minutes in the month of March, but they also gathered pledges for food and money donations based on time spent reading. They wrote letters to area businesses to raise added funds. Their efforts netted a total of \$2,800.

On Friday students will be punching calculators and following a specified grocery list as they carefully select food items in ways that stretch their dollars. Once the students have filled their shopping charts and checked out, they will load the groceries onto a truck already packed with other food items donated by Twin Lake students and staff. They will then travel to the Muskegon Rescue Mission Men’s Shelter located at 400 Laketon Avenue to form a “fireman’s line” to transfer the items from the truck to the pantry shelves.

Phyllis Williams of the Muskegon Rescue Mission visited the third grade classes back in February when the project called “Read to Feed” first began. She taught the students about the purpose and work of the Muskegon Rescue Mission and shared statistics regarding the critical need for the food pantry. Teacher Tom Polanyi enlisted the help of Meijer Inc. Store Director Mike Veltman and his Assistant Sherrie Shady to further the project. This is the second year Meijer has supported the *Read to Feed* Project.

Polanyi said he kept the students engaged in the project by suggesting “weird place reading night,” “read and bump” which rewarded them by allowing them to move their desks to a new location in the classroom, “gym night” which included reading in the library and later playing games in the gym, and “movie night” which rewarded reading students with a movie. To track their reading, students turned in “read-aloud slips” designed to track 15 minute blocks of reading time. Polanyi believes *Read to Feed* will allow students to see firsthand what their philanthropic efforts have accomplished. “The kids are awesome! I am so proud of them. Words cannot express how I feel about their amazing efforts. Little kids can do big things!” said Polanyi.