

Polar Express Night Little Elementary School Arvada, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

Little Elementary School's Polar Express Night created an opportunity for staff to work with partners to provide family-friendly pathways to access community resources during the holidays. During the evening, which many attendees described as "magical," families formed valuable partnerships with Little staff and community organizations.



Having a committee of staff and community members meticulously plan the event led to its success. An Arvada-based church, the Arvada Food Bank, and the Arvada Center partnered with Little Elementary. The church provided volunteers, food donations, crafts, and Santa Claus and his elves. The Arvada Center provided a closing of the event with ballet dancers performing "Dolls Tea."

Little Elementary's family liaison explains: "The church group showed exceptional dedication by providing many volunteers, food donations, crafts and even Santa Claus and the elves! Parents and staff were also an integral part of the event, and many students added their unique artistic talents, transforming the school building to recreate scenes from the movie."

Of course, the Polar Express would be incomplete without its conductor. Luckily, Little's principal was on hand to fill the role. The principal clipped golden tickets as families entered the event, much to the students' delight!

Polar express night celebrated multiple traditions that Little's families enjoy throughout the year. A Chanukah table was particularly popular as families competed playing the dreidel game.



Polar Express night was very well attended, with more than 320 people in the building. Staff distributed close to 100 pictures with Santa to students and 50 food baskets to families. The atmosphere was festive and feedback was positive throughout the evening and the following week. Families expressed that they felt welcome and special. In addition, many families received help that they needed over the holiday season.

Standard 1--Welcoming All Families