

# Blackrock second-graders honor veterans with dinner



Angelena Chapman•Daily Times

Valerie Bishop's second-grade class held a Veteran's Dinner at Blackrock Elementary School last Wednesday. They performed patriotic songs and poems in the Veterans' honor and donated \$425 to the Rhode Island National Guard Soldiers and Airmen Emergency Relief Fund.

## Students serve up Fourth annual Veteran's Dinner

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COVENTRY—For the fourth year in a row, one second grade class was busy last week honoring local veterans.

Last Wednesday night, Valerie Bishop's second-grade class held their fourth annual Veteran's Dinner at Blackrock Elementary School.

It all started four years ago, Bishop said, when there were two parents of students in her class that were deployed to Iraq.

Holding the dinner was a way "to help the kids out through a difficult time," she said.

After that year, when they dedicated a garden outside the school to all veterans, Bishop

said the event was something they felt they "just couldn't not do."

At Blackrock, she said they have kind of adopted the Korean War Veterans, holding a breakfast for them earlier this school year, but at Wednesday's event there were veterans from all different conflicts, eras and branches of the armed forces.

She said the gathering is for the families too.

Her class sang several songs and recited—some from memory—poems about veterans and what they had done for their country.

The students held up the letters "B-R-A-V-E," each letter representing something about veterans, whether it was "A" for their "amazing patriotism" or "E" for the "energy they have shown."

Every student in Bishop's class played a role in the performance and also served dinner to the veterans that filled

Blackrock's cafeteria.

One student recited that they wanted to "honor all veterans for the many sacrifices they have made for our great country."

Another said veterans were "truly amazing Americans" and another called them "heroes to us."

One student said veterans should be treated better and told them "We will never forget you."

"A veteran," a student said, "is one of the best Americans I know."

Veterans are "very good people because they protect our country," a student read.

One student outlined the sacrifices veterans have to make, whether it is "getting no sleep," "eating food they don't like" or "fighting in wars."

The whole class sang "Nifty Fifty United States," "God Bless the USA" and other patriotic songs.

Before Wednesday's dinner

Bishop's second-grade class raised money through a Papa Gino's night, where they had a raffle, and a Red, White and Blue Day.

The students raised \$325 to donate to the Rhode Island National Guard's Soldiers and Airmen Emergency Relief Fund.

While they were presenting the check, another donation of \$100 also came in from the Coventry Dunkin' Donuts.

A colonel from the National Guard, there to accept the donation, said they receive calls every other day from someone who needs assistance.

The fund can be used to help a service member's family if they have a child in the hospital or need a new chimney, for example, he explained.

The fund does not use federal or state money, but comes all from donations, he said.

They also had a "veterans'

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# Veterans of all branches invited to dinner

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only raffle" at the dinner and Bishop reminded the veterans about the garden.

"That is your garden," Bishop told the veterans.

"That is for you," she said, encouraging them to come and sit in the garden outside the school.

She thanked the parents of her students who had donated their time to help put new mulch in before the dinner.

Bishop told the crowded cafeteria, "I want all my veterans to come back next year. And bring a friend!"

Bishop told the Times that the event, which the kids had been working on for weeks beforehand, also teaches the history

of America to students.

She said that through the program students "have so much more respect for veterans."

Bishop said one student told her how he said "thank you" to a veteran he saw while shopping at Stop and Shop.

The students "know more than your average 7-year-old," Bishop said.