

Koats4Kids plans to put a new winter coat on every single student at Pinello Elementary School in Security, Colorado.

The August temperatures outside of Pinello Elementary School in Security, Colorado today were breaking heat records. But the good people at Koats4Kids, a non-profit organization that collects and distributes new coats for children in need, were busy planning their annual fundraiser that is the key to putting a new winter coat on all 330 students at the school.

Since before school started last week, staffers have been preparing for the big event. The school counselor, Darlene Monson, has been helping to make sure Pinello Elementary is ready for the big day the free coats will be distributed to students. School librarian and closet art aficionado Sarah Taylor, has volunteered to help the kids make “coat” artwork to show their appreciation for the efforts of all those involved, from the planners, to the event sponsors, to the coat donors. The kids’ creations will also help decorate the gym where the coats will be distributed.

Monson tells us that the percentage of Pinello Elementary School students who receive free or reduced lunches is the highest of any other school in Widefield School District 3. It lands somewhere between 70 and 80 percent. That means that there is a lot of need here.

She remembers five years ago, the last time Koats4Kids came to the school, the gym was decorated with all the coats and the kids’ artwork. Local businesses chipped in when they needed to borrow coat racks from WalMart and hangers from Ross.

In order to receive a coat, students and at least one parent needed to come in to meet their child’s teacher at Fall Parent/Teacher conferences. As soon as they were done, the family was able to go in to the gym and pick out a coat. “It’s a great way to encourage parents to come to the school and meet their kiddo’s teacher and at the same time pick out a perfectly fitting coat for their son or daughter.” says School Counselor Darlene Monson.

Fifth grader Matthew Franklin came into the school’s front office in search of a snack from his mom who works as a health technician (think school nurse). He vaguely remembers the day, as a kindergartener, that he walked through the gym after Parent/Teacher Conferences and his mom helped him pick out a coat. She definitely remembers thinking how fortunate they were that they didn’t need to worry about figuring out how to purchase a coat for their son that year. “Not everyone is so lucky to be able to just go out and buy a coat. I’m really thankful that every single student at this school will be able to come to school every single day with a warm coat to wear.”



It's a record-breaking hot August day at Pinello Elementary School in Security, Colorado as the school and the non-profit organization Koats4Kids ramp up efforts to provide winter coats to every student at the school with Stephanie Sills, Attendance Secretary. Photo by Kate Walters/Koats4Kids



Matthew Franklin (Left, Age 5) received a brand-new coat in kindergarten from Koats4Kids at Pinello Elementary School in Security, Colorado. Now he is in 5th grade (Right, Age 10) and looking forward to getting a new winter coat during Parent/Teacher Conferences in November. Photo by Kate Walters/Koats4Kids and Brittany Franklin





Matthew Franklin (Age 10) with mom, Brittany Franklin, at Pinello Elementary School. Photo by Kate Walters/Koats4Kids



Matthew Franklin's brothers William now 6 years old and in 1st Grade and Samuel, age 9 and 4th Grade are excited to finally be receiving free coats of their own for the first time this year. Sam remembers when his brother came home from kindergarten with a new coat. Photo by Brittany Franklin/Mom (Picture, 2014)