

# Willowick students help senior recover from robbery

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While the items stolen from an elderly man in November may never be replaced, students at Willowick Middle School wanted to ensure he knew the people of the city were behind him.

Charlie Bauer, 82, was robbed after two men posing as water department employees entered his home. While one man distracted Bauer, the other stole \$1,300 worth of his and his deceased sister's jewelry.

The men are still at large. Students at Willowick Mid-

## An early gift



Hear more

of Charlie

Bauer's

story and about how the students got involved.

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dle School heard about the incident and were upset it happened in their city, said Willowick Mayor Richard Bonde.

A few English classes decided to write letters to Bauer to help show him the community was there to support him, Bonde said.

Bonde said he thought it

would be a great experience to bring Bauer to the school to receive the letters from the students.

"I wanted them to know how important their work was," the mayor said.

"I thought the letters fit in perfectly with the whole theme of this time of the year," Bonde added.

Bauer received a phone call Thursday from Bonde, who told him about the letters and asked him to visit the school.

"I can't get over it. I'm still just overwhelmed. I can't thank you all enough for your time," Bauer said.

During his visit, Bauer was sure to impart some wisdom

to the students.

In 50 years on the job, Bauer said he missed only five days of work, and he stressed the importance of school and hard work.

"God feeds the sparrows, but he doesn't toss the worms," he said.

He still cries about his sister, who died in March, and he encouraged the students not to be afraid of their emotions.

"Crying isn't a sign of weakness," Bauer told the students.

After Bauer finished with his words, a number of students volunteered to read their letters to Bauer in front of the

crowd.

Even with the hardships he has endured recently, Bauer has kept a positive outlook on life and has not lost his faith.

"I am still blessed in spite of what has happened," he said, a gold cross dangling from his neck.

As the students left the room to return to class, each of the 50 or so students talked to Bauer and gave him a hug.

In a few years, the students might not remember the presents they received this holiday season, but Bauer's visit will leave a lasting impression, Bonde said.

"They'll remember this for the rest of their lives," he said.