



## DECEMBER 17TH 2009 Santa Visits Cole: Christmas Comes to Inspiring Denver Innovation School

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Today's *Denver Post* has an excellent story about a generous Christmas deed performed at a truly inspirational school:

Millionaire businessman Tom Gamel stood before a classroom of sixth-graders at Cole Arts & Science Academy on Wednesday, about to blow their minds with a nifty gift, but first, he wanted to impart some wisdom.

"I am a very lucky person," said Gamel, who owns Timpfe Trailers and has made wise investments. "The reason I am able to buy you each a present is because of education. I want to urge you, if you want to grow up and be successful, get an education." ...

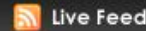
[Friends of Cole foundation co-founder Jason] Janz and his wife began buying gifts from Wal-Mart — princess dresses, Tonka trucks, toy helicopters, baby dolls and MP3 players. There were 18 different types of gifts, one for each of the school's 620 preschoolers through eighth-graders. Gifts filled six crates and were delivered by a semi and unloaded with a forklift. The total cost was \$13,500.

Ten mothers spent two days to wrap every present — all of which were personalized. African-American girls received African-American dolls. Latina girls got Latina dolls.

I could be jealous that all the students at Cole got a present. You know what, though? I'm not. It's Christmastime, and many of these kids don't have much at all.

I am writing about this not just because it's a bunch of poor kids in Denver getting presents. What makes it even more exciting is the work of the [Cole Arts and Science Academy](#) as a new innovation school, making all kinds of intense new progress in helping students to catch up and excel in reading, math and other subjects. My [Education Policy Center](#) friends visited the school about 5 weeks ago and were very impressed.

It also gives me a warm feeling to know the kids in this picture (and many others) not only benefit academically from the help Mr. Gamel's foundation provides the school, but also that because of his generosity — *and maybe a little of Santa's magic, too?* — they all will be able to enjoy Christmas a little bit more.



### Other Great Sites



### What People Are Saying

[Dr. Jay Greene](#): "Eddie has the best blog of any 5-year-old that I know. In fact, Ed has one of the best education blogs, period."

[Michael Roberts, Westword](#): "...[Eddie] talks and thinks suspiciously like the Institute's [Jon Caldara](#) -- meaning he's a conservative with a sense of humor."

[Jonathan Oglesby, Edspresso](#): "I'm not ashamed to admit this 5 year old teaches me something every time he posts"

[Elizabeth Crum](#): "[W]ritten by a clever 5-year old named Ed....Aspiring education reformers should go take a look."

[Global Scholar](#): Eddie is "an astute commentator for being only five years old"

### Twitter Updates

Merry Christmas: Ending 2009 on a Positive Education Reform Note:



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