

## BAKING BREAD TOGETHER



Jared Ramsdell / Journal Inquirer

Sophia Galotto, 3, left, and her mother, Heather, an English teacher at Stafford Middle School, work together to knead their bread dough during the annual family bread baking night at the school. Students, staff, and their families each baked two loaves of bread. The families keep one loaf and the other is donated to those in need. ■ See story, more photos on Page 3 ■ Additional photos are available in the Photos tab of the JI's website.



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Colby Holland, 2, gets some assistance with kneading his bread Thursday from his mother Bethany, a guidance counselor at Stafford Middle School.

## Program brings families together to help others

By Eric Bedner

Journal Inquirer

STAFFORD — A home economics teacher at the middle school is teaching her students a valuable skill and simultaneously making them aware of the importance of helping those in need.

To teach her students the art of bread baking, health and home economics teacher Jean Titus started a program nine years ago, in which students and family members work collaboratively mixing and kneading dough, and then baking fresh bread.

Each student makes two loaves of basic bread, keeping one for his or her family and donating the other to a family in need during the holiday season.

"It's a time to show your generosity and help those in need," Titus said.

Titus hosts two nights at the middle school each year, during which about 20 families participate, including students from each grade at the middle school.

Participants, with assistance from Titus and other Stafford Middle School staff, bake one loaf at home and the other at school the next day, donating the latter to a local soup kitchen, the senior center, or other local organizations that help those in need.

Titus emphasizes the importance of attention to detail during the class, making sure students follow directions carefully, mix ingredients correctly, let the dough stand and rise, and especially use proper kneading techniques.

She said that the kneading process "is when you truly make the best bread, and that takes time."

The program began when members of King Arthur Flour Company came to the school for a baking skills program — visiting with students for



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Each baker produces two loaves, one to keep and one to donate to people in need.

about an hour to demonstrate how to make fresh bread.

Each year, the company donates all the supplies needed for the program.

Titus, who has been teaching at the middle school for 15 years, hopes this year's students will yield the 400th loaf of bread baked over the years. About 40 more loaves are needed to reach that goal.

Titus says that in addition to the students learning a valuable skill, the bread baking helps bring families closer together by participating in a joint program. Some families come back year after year.

Having families be together contributes to "the overall good feeling it gives you," she said. "It's really turned out to be a great event."