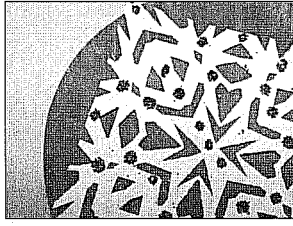
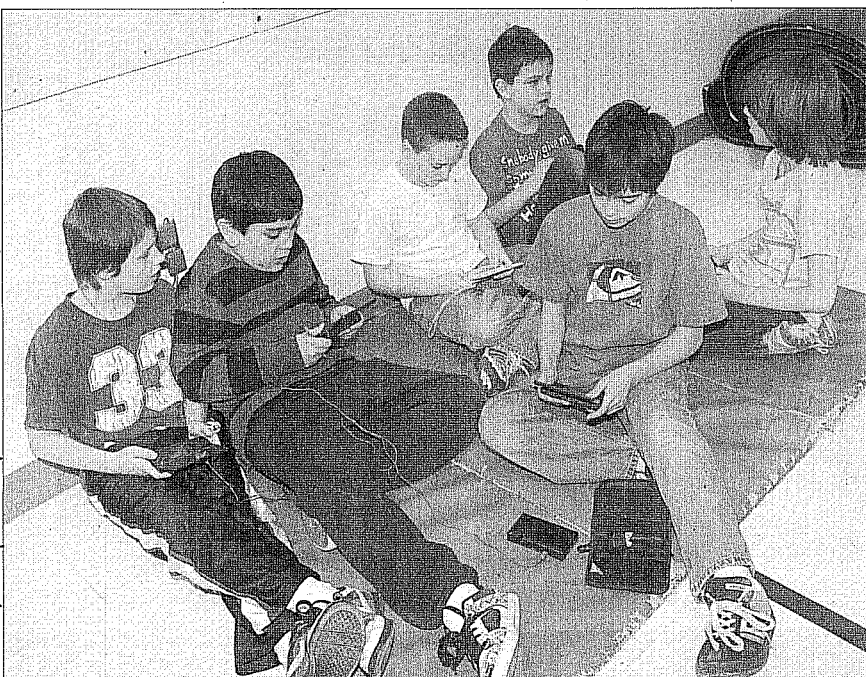


Summer School District children created holiday arts and crafts during the first week of winter camp.



## Winter break camp entertains children, eases the mind of parents



Herbild photos/Caitleen Carroll

Summer School District children are absorbed in playing Mario Brothers during the third day of winter camp.

# Providing a place for kids

BY AVANI NADKARNI  
of The Herald

For the Summer School District's children, winter break means two full weeks of no school.

For many parents, however, that can mean the added stress of finding someone to care for their children during their work day.

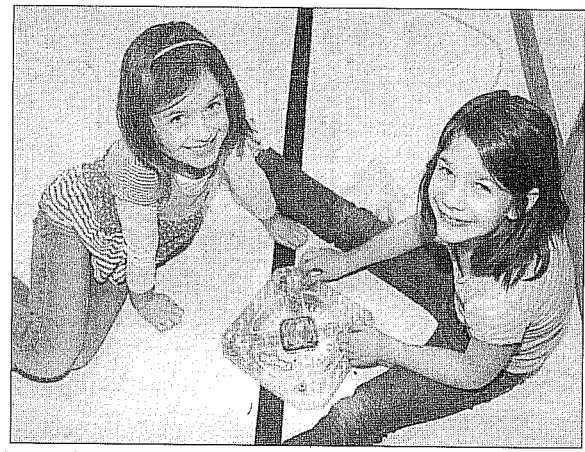
The Summer School District and the Summer/Bonney Lake Recreation Department recognized that early on and began holding a winter break activities camp for the district's children in the early 1990s. The program, which is held at the Robert Miller Gymnasium behind Daffodil Valley Elementary, has rapidly grown in popularity, said Liberty Ridge Elementary Before and After School Club Site Director Alyssa Storm.

"A lot of the parents don't get work off," said Storm, who helps supervise the camp along with staff from the other elementary schools' Before and After School Clubs. "So where are the kids going to go?"

Many parents would scramble to find childcare without the camp, said Shanna Crane, the Summer/Bonney Lake Recreation Department recreation specialist.

"I think a lot of the families are in need of the extra care," Crane said. "We've had many parents thank us."

The camp, which is held every week-day of the Summer School District's



Emily Olson, left, and Ally McCoy play the board game Trouble.

winter break, excluding Christmas Eve, Christmas and New Year's Day, allows children to interact with other children, a benefit Storm said she thinks is crucial.

"They are around other kids, playing with each other," she explained. "I think that's important, rather than sitting at home and watching TV for 10 days."

Instead, the two dozen or so children, some who come every day and others who attend

only a few days, create craft projects, play outdoors if the weather permits and play group games. Sometimes they watch movies too, Storm said, but it's usually while they are doing another activity, too.

Eight-year-old Taylor Ford, who attends McAlder Elementary, only attended for the first week this year and said she loved coming.

"My mom has to work, so she needs someone to take care of me," Ford explained. "(Camp) is really fun. It's like being in school with your friends, but it's more fun."

The cost of the camp may be cheaper than other childcare for some families — the district charges \$25 per day and the camp is open 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., and all the fees go toward the camp itself, paying for snacks and staff time. But, said Crane, they are aware that it may be pricey

"In the district, we have Hardship Donations, where families who can afford a bit extra can donate a little when signing their kid up for classes and sports leagues," Crane explained. "If a family really needs it, we can use those."

For kids like Isaac Knaack, a 9-year-old McAlder student, cost isn't on the forefront, fun is. Knaack said his favorite part were the physical activities.

"I play all the ball games here," he said. "There are a lot of activities, so it's better than sitting at home."

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