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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Bellevue Firefighters Brighten Holidays for YES Families**

#### ***Success kids decorate gingerbread houses with mentors and receive gift from firefighters***

Bellevue, Wash (Dec. 9, 2010)—Yesterday, Bellevue Firefighters Community Support Foundation gifted families in Youth Eastside Services Success Mentoring Program with gift cards for food or toys and participated in YES' annual gingerbread decorating celebration for mentors and their mentees.

Five firefighters from Station 3 at Crossroads Park visited with the kids and even jumped in to help Ryan Haley, 12, with his gingerbread house when his mentor was running late. Among the mentor-mentee pairs at the event was Shawn Bangard, 16, and his mentor Karen Greytek who have been paired since Shawn was in first grade. In all 27 families received gifts from the firefighters foundation.

"It's wonderful to have the help and support of the firefighters. They offer real help for these families and the kids look up to them," said Mary Erickson, the Success Mentor Program coordinator.

The YES Success Mentoring program matches youth from single parent households with adults who want to make a positive impact in their lives. Currently the program serves 27 kids, but there is a waiting list of 37. There is a particular need for male mentors as the wait can be up to three years for a boy to be matched.

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**About Youth Eastside Services:** YES is a nonprofit organization and a leading provider of youth counseling and substance abuse services in the region. Since 1968, YES has been a lifeline for kids and families, offering treatment, education and prevention services to help youth become healthy, confident and self-reliant and families to become strong, supportive and loving. While YES accepts Medicaid, insurance and offers a sliding scale, no one is turned away for inability to pay. For more information, visit [www.YouthEastsideServices.org](http://www.YouthEastsideServices.org).