

Helping Nobody become Somebody

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Education

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Lily Matthews of Katherine McFadden's Grade 1 class at KTTPS, holds up the "Nobody" doll in front of the bulletin board explaining the program

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Lily Matthews took "Nobody" home with her for the weekend and helped do chores for her family. Through her hard work, she receives \$5/week which she is putting toward buying a goat and a mango tree for a family in Africa.

Because of her good deeds, "Nobody" is now sporting a picture of a goat and a chart of Lily's chores on its chest.

It's all part of the "Who is Nobody?" program at Kincardine Township-Tiverton Public School. Seven classes, from Senior Kindergarten to Grade 6, including the support class, have welcomed an unadorned, faceless denim doll into their classrooms. Each student will take home "Nobody" and complete some good works, pin a representative article on "Nobody" and then write a report about what she did.

Lily, a student in Katherine McFadden's Grade 1 class, said she liked taking "Nobody" home but she had to keep the doll in a bag, otherwise her cat would have scratched it all up.

McFadden's students are also collecting eyeglasses as a class project. The eyeglasses will be sent to Third World countries to help people who can't afford glasses. So far, the class has gathered up about 100 pairs of glasses.

This is the first time a local school has taken on the program, said McFadden, adding that another school in the northern end of Bluewater District has tried it which is how she learned of the idea.

"It's a tangible way of using our character traits and actions," she said. "You have to help another living thing, be it people, animals or the earth, and it has to be a reflection of your own personal interests and activities. With Lily, she helps her family by doing chores, and she is making a global connection by purchasing a goat and a mango tree for someone in Africa."

The program began in early November once the kits arrived, said McFadden. Thanks to the Kincardine Rotary Club which purchased two kits, the Bluewater District School Board which bought three kits, Meridian Credit Union which bought a kit, and KTTPS and its School Community Council which bought a kit, there were enough for all seven classes to be involved.

Each kit contains the "Nobody" doll, teacher's guide, student guides, charts, DVDs and music. "We had a week of introduction, and now each class is under way," said McFadden. Her class project will run for just two weeks, while other class projects will run the whole year. Melinda Smeagal's class is reading 100 books and then Scholastic Canada will donate 100 books to children in need.

When each student returns on Monday after taking "Nobody" home for the weekend, he has to write a report about what he did, present it to the class and then draw a picture to put into the book that follows the transformation of "Nobody" to "Somebody."

"The program helps children understand that through acts of kindness we can make people who feel like 'Nobody', feel like 'Somebody,'" said McFadden. "At some point, we all feel like a 'Nobody,' but everybody is 'Somebody'."

For more information about the "Who is Nobody?" program, check the website at www.whoisnobody.com

