

A goal and lots of vision

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By Lesley Bovie

WHITBY -- When Brianna Linton decided to collect old eyeglasses for developing nations, little did she know it would cause such a spectacle.

The second grader at West Lynde Public School envisioned handing over 100 pairs, at best, to the Whitby Lions Club.

When This Week caught up with Brianna last month, she had managed to collect 514 pairs of eyeglasses for her Who is NOBODY? school project by e-mailing friends and sending notes home with classmates.

Since then, her story has inspired several hundred more donations.

The final count?

"We counted them last night. It took three hours," said her mom, Niecy. "We counted 3,948."

The bulk of those specs came from Michelle and Dan Walton of Whitby, who recently dropped off 2,000 pairs to the Linton home.

"They also donated a lot of empty glass cases," said Mrs. Linton. "She had been trying to do the same thing through her work but couldn't find anyone to ship them to Calgary for her."

Through the Give the Gift of Sight program, local Lions clubs will ship eyeglasses to Calgary, where they are refurbished before being sent to developing nations.

While consenting to have their names used, the Waltons opted to stay out of the limelight. Another Whitby resident plans to host an eyeglass drive this fall and donate them in a student's name.

Meanwhile, Brianna says she was surprised by the generosity as were her teachers Rhonda McCutcheon and Cheryl Singer-Coulson.

She even received a pair in the mail from relatives in Newfoundland.

"I would like to thank my family, friends, teachers and people in my community who sent eyeglasses to me so I could help out people who couldn't afford to buy them," Brianna adds. "Thank you very much"

Next on her list is another Lions project -- collecting old towels for the Canadian National Institute for the Blind used to bathe guide dogs.



Ron Pietroniro/Metroland Durham Region Media Group WHITBY -- Herb Visser from the Whitby Lions Club was on hand to pick up the more than 3,948 pairs of eyeglasses that were collected by eight-year-old Brianna Linton. Brianna, a student at West Lynde P.S. started the project with a target of 100 pairs and quickly surpassed that number. The Lions Club along with Lens Crafters will distribute the glasses to third world countries as well as areas in Northern Canada. April 18, 2007.