

## Ajax students ready to help kids in need

*Six-year-old boy holds drive for hockey gear, kindergarten students collect food*

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AJAX -- A six-year-old Ajax boy is looking to share his love of hockey with kids who can't afford to play the game by holding a holiday hockey gear drive.

Raine Phillips, a Grade 1 student at Duffin's Bay Public School, and his family decided to organize the drive for gently used hockey equipment after Raine brought the Nobody Doll home. The doll is a character education tool and the goal is for kids to make it a somebody by doing good deeds.

"We came up with a gently used hockey drive because gear is massively expensive," said his mother, Kelly McKeown. "Even average people in our neighbourhood rule it out and it's so fun and Canadian."

The gear will be donated to HEROS, an organization which reaches out to kids in economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods, such as Toronto's Jane and Finch area, through hockey.

"It's for kids who can't afford hockey," said Raine.

He said he plays different positions and his favourite part of the game is the faceoff.

Ms. McKeown said that while Raine is young, he understands the need to help other kids.

"He does understand, we constantly talked about that we're blessed with lots and there's many people that aren't," she said.

Donations of all types of hockey gear, including skates, helmets, sticks, gloves, pads, jerseys, shorts and more, are accepted at the school at 66 Pittmann Cres., or at the south Ajax Sobeys at 955 Westney Rd. S.

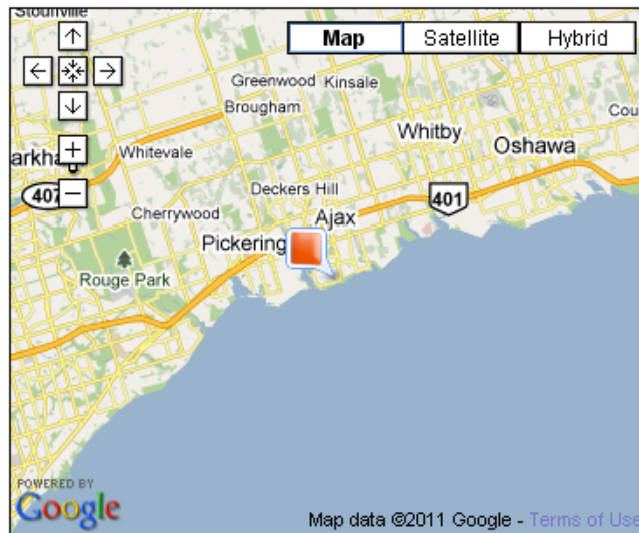
The collection will be held until Jan. 7 and Ms. McKeown said if the kids are getting new hockey gear for Christmas, parents should consider donating what they no longer need.

The kindergarten students at the school are also collecting food for local food banks and mittens for children at a local women's shelter.

Duffins Bay principal Lousie Wilhelm said a class tackles the food drive every year.

"This is the first time the little ones have taken it on. I think they talked about how we show we care," she said.

Food and mitten donations can be dropped off at the school before the Christmas break.



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