

Courtice

A Clarington Community

A weekly in-depth look at the communities that shape Clarington • News Editor: Ian McMillan • Phone 905-579-4400, Ext. 2248 • Fax 905-579-1809 • E-Mail: imcmillan@durhamregion.com

COURTICE

newsdurhamregion.com

Dr. G.J. MacGillivray students answer the question: Who is Nobody

By Julie Cashin-Oster
Special to The Statesman

COURTICE -- By helping NOBODY become a "Somebody" local students are gaining insight into what makes them the individuals they are.

The students' journey begins with a box arriving in the classroom addressed to Somebody from NOBODY.

Inside the box is a blue denim doll, similar to a gingerbread man. This is NOBODY.

NOBODY has no face, no character, no abilities, no gender, no interests, no ethnic or cultural identity -- it has no friends.

"Who Is NOBODY? is character education teaching students through their actions," said Kelly Clark, elementary school teacher and creator of the "Who Is NOBODY?" program. "Students experience, among other things, empathy, courage, perseverance, compassion, fairness, optimism, honesty through taking action to help others."

The "Who Is NOBODY?" program is currently being put into action at Dr. G.J. MacGillivray Public School in Courtice thanks to a donation by the Courtice Rotary Club.

One of the components of Rotary International is a literacy piece. Courtice Rotary Club, along with many other clubs in the GTA have literacy chairs with a mandate to support youth in their area.

"After a presentation by Ms. Clark, we liked what she was trying to accomplish," said Dale Gibbons, Courtice Rotary Club project lead. "It was a perfect fit. It gives kids an opportunity to express themselves in a non-threatening way."

The Courtice Rotary Club was instrumental at getting the program to the school boards as well as providing a financial commitment.

Two classes at Dr. G.J. MacGillivray Public School are involved with Who Is NOBODY?, a Grade 3/4 class and a Grade 8. The school has taken a slightly different approach in which the younger grade will be helping NOBODY to become Somebody with the leadership of the older kids.

Everybody in the class helps NOBODY become Somebody by adding a 3D attachment to NOBODY and writing a story and drawing a picture that goes in a class scrap-



Walter Passarella / Metroland Durham Region Media Group

COURTICE -- Angela Parnell holding 'Nobody', poses with her students. The class will take part in a program called Who is Nobody, a project to encourage students to discover what makes them unique by helping others.

"We don't know where it will go. The kids are directing it -- it is limitless."

— Angela Parnell

book and captures their project. This allows students to plan and implement an altruistic project and then reflect, document and share their experiences with their peers.

The Scrapbook and NOBODY allow everybody in the class to learn from each student's individual experience and create awareness; experience how easy and good it feels to help others and see how they fit in by being different.

"We just started the first week back (from Christmas break) and will finish up the end of June," said Angela Parnell, Grade 3/4 teacher. "We introduced it over the last couple of weeks. We talked about the three areas suggested -- humans, animals and the environment, in which they could help, however we haven't limited them. We don't know where it will go. The kids are directing it -- it is limit-

less."

While the Grade 3/4 class will be doing the project, taking NOBODY home, attaching the 3D object and adding their piece to the scrap book, the Grade 8 students will take on a mentor role.

"The Grade 8 students will help them with the scrap book and attach 3D object. They will also be there to answer questions and hopefully learn something about themselves in the process," said Jennifer Keller, Grade 8 teacher.

The students have been talking about names and want to vote on the gender. Both teachers are hoping that NOBODY will just evolve. They don't

what him or her to be gender specific. If a student's passion is animals, then they are free to add a tail.

Who Is NOBODY? is based on five simple steps. Each step is accompanied by decision-making tools.

1. Choose a living thing (people, animals, and the environment).
2. Use your interests and abilities to be kind to living things.
3. Add a creative attachment to the doll which represents your kind act.
4. Write a story and draw a picture about your Who Is NOBODY? experience.
5. Bring the doll back to school and present it to your class.

Everything is provided in a kit so

the program is easy for teachers to set up. It takes five minutes of classroom time per week, has year-long impact, adds excitement to class each week and is reusable. The project is self-directed. Students make their own decision on what to add to NOBODY.

Each student gets a week to take the materials home and follow the five simple steps that build a project to help a living thing. As the student works through the steps, Ms. Clarke explains, he realizes the project is about him. Students begin to figure out who they are -- what makes them unique, encourages them to stop worrying about trying to be the same (as everyone).

For more information about Who Is NOBODY? contact Kelly Clark at info@whoisnobody.com or call 416-597-2011. Program website: www.whoisnobody.com.

www.whoisnobody.com

email: info@whoisnobody.com

phone: (416) 333 7774