

A second grader with a social conscience

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By Lesley Bovie

WHITBY -- Brianna Linton has perfect eyesight but the seven-year-old knows how she'd feel if she needed glasses but couldn't afford them.

"I would be sad," says the second grader at Whitby's West Lynde Public School.

Her goal is to collect 100 pairs of used eyeglasses to send to developing nations as part of the Give the Gift of Sight program.

So far, she's collected 514.

"Even though I've reached my goal, I want to continue," says Brianna, who put out the call for glasses by e-mailing friends and sending notes home with fellow students. A notice was also posted on her neighbourhood website.

She heard about the program from her grandfather, an Agincourt Lions Club member. Brianna plans to turn her specs of all shapes and sizes into the Whitby Lion's Club March 23.

Always one to help out, Brianna has a supersized social conscience, says her mom Niecy. Last Christmas, she spent the holiday serving dinner to needy families.

Her eyeglass campaign is also part of a larger school project called Who is NOBODY?, in which students are challenged to do something to better their community.

Those completing a project are able to take home the NOBODY doll for four days. Brianna left her mark on NOBODY, a lens-free pair of glasses.

"Someone has to put the eyes in," she adds.

Since being founded in 1988, the Give the Gift of Sight campaign has helped five million people on five continents. Its goal is to aid seven million by 2008, according to its website.

Locally, used eyeglasses can be dropped off at any Lions club or Lenscrafters. Brianna asks that donations be made in her name so she can continue to track how many have been collected.



Jason Liebrechts / Metroland Durham Region Media Group
WHITBY -- Brianna Linton, a second grader at West Lynde Public School, is taking part in the NOBODY doll campaign. She has asked the community for help in hitting her target of collecting 100 pairs of eyeglasses to give to the Whitby Lions Club for unfortunate children all over the world. Mar. 14, 2007