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Everybody is Somebody

By Andrew Ramos
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Move over Pinocchio, there's a new doll in town searching for an identity.

The grades 5 and 6 students of Empire Public School are helping Nobody the doll gain a personality.

Nobody was sent to the class by Rotary Club of Welland as part of the Everybody is Somebody program.

"Everyone was very excited," says teacher Barbara Jacobson. "They all wanted to take him home right away so we had to have a draw."

The students take Nobody home for a week and use their interests to help a living thing, such as an animal or the environment.

The student then uses a creative attachment to represent their experiences with Nobody and express them through written stories or drawn pictures in a scrapbook, followed by a presentation to the class.

This is all to educate students in strength of character, by helping give Nobody a real personality.

Students listed courage, initiative, respect and perseverance as some of the current character traits already given to the doll by their peers.

"I've learned that my students really enjoy helping others," says Jacobson. "They're kind-hearted and enthusiastic."

The class has started a penny collection to support the Free the Children part of the Adopt a Village campaign. Parents have donated to a variety of additional causes.

"The most important thing we've learned is to help others," says Grade 6 student Zach Chernish.

Grade 5 student Justice Fleming agreed, saying the message of "everybody is somebody is important, too."

Nobody has been in the class since November, giving 16 of the 23 students a chance to take the doll home and start making it into a real person.

"I like it because it has a lot of personality," says Grade 5 student Dylan Koros.

Fellow fifth-grader Trisha Moffat says she likes Nobody "because he likes to help people."

At the end of the year Nobody will be given a name and gender.

"It's a wonderful program and all the school's should have it," says Empire principal Patrice Johnson.

Koros goes further, saying "all the classes of all the schools" should have it.

The scrapbook will be presented to the Rotary Club on April 26 by representatives of the class.

Andrew Ramos is a second-year journalism-print student from Niagara College on co-op placement.

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