

Inside The Niagara Advance

- [Local News](#)
- [Local Features](#)
- [Local Sports](#)
- [Opinion](#)

Features

- [Osprey Writers Group](#)
- [Ottawa Column](#)
- [Queen's Park Column](#)

About Us

- [About the Niagara Advance](#)

Osprey Personals

- [Osprey Personals](#)

Feedback

- [Read Feedback](#)
- [Post Feedback](#)
- [Contact](#)

Osprey News

- [Archive Service](#)
- [Archive Service](#)



Kelly Clark shows how Nobody becomes Somebody.

Photo: Nicole Montreuil

Anti-bullying program aims to help students turn Nobody into Somebody through sharing

Nicole Montreuil
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Who is Nobody?

Schools across the Niagara region are about to find out, thanks to the NOTL Rotary Club and former NOTL resident Kelly Clark's anti-bullying education program.

Designed to encourage students to discover what makes them unique by helping others, using the Service above Self model, the program is almost deceptively simple.

A cardboard box containing, among other things, a stylized blue figure and an introduction that declares the doll "Nobody".

The program works by asking students to take Nobody, who lacks culture, cause, friends and experience, and infuse it with pieces of themselves.

"Everybody helps Nobody become Somebody," Clark said.

Students are assigned a week during the school year to take Nobody home, perform an act of service to others, and add a three-dimensional moment of their experiences. It's meant to encourage mutual respect, something Clark said she's seen lacking in some classrooms. Her experiences teaching at an exclusive school in Toronto proved at-risk children aren't necessarily children from economically disadvantaged areas— they're children too intent on gaining acceptance from their peers for superficial things without the security of mutual respect.

"Often when you see kids at school trying to fit in, its gaining respect for themselves for something that's not earned or lasting," she said.

In her experience, students typically try to fit in by ignoring the things that make them unique. The program encourages them to find causes they feel passionately about by examining what makes them special.

Previous participants have used the experience to explain their culture, collect eyeglasses or toys for children overseas, spread awareness of environmental causes, and raise funds.

The program, sponsored by NOTL Rotary Club, will be in Col. Butler and Laura Secord schools locally. The club has also sponsored the program in six other schools.

Clark said the schools will implement the program as they see fit, but said the kits would arrive shortly.

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