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Shaping Nobody into a somebody

Students help Shriners with good deeds

Posted By Barbara Simpson — Delhi News-Record

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Grade 6 teacher Katy Luke and her students (from left) Tyler Butler, RJ Ernst and Riley Pettinger, of Delhi Public School, donated about 5,000 pop cans to Auby Cox (back row from left), John Johnson, Bob Castles and Brent Smith, of Norfolk Shriners. The students completed this good deed as part of their class Who is Nobody project. (Barbara Simpson Delhi News-Record)

Three Delhi Public School students have helped their class' effort to shape their newest pupil Nobody into a somebody — and no, Nobody isn't the latest celebrity baby name.

Nobody is, in fact, a blue denim doll sans name, personality or interests donated by the Rotary Club. Thousands of 'nobodies' have reached classrooms across the province, allowing students the chance to define Nobody through community projects.

Grade 6 students Riley Pettinger, RJ Ernst and Tyler Butler are the latest classmates to brainstorm a community initiative to add character to their classroom's Nobody doll. The trio collected about 5,000 pop cans to donate to the Norfolk Shrine Club. In turn, the Shriners will sell these cans and utilize the funds to benefit ill children who use the club's services.

While the boys were modest about why they chose the project, Tyler's mother Stacey Butler explained that the cause hit particularly close to home.

"We knew two children from Pine Grove who were involved in it," she said, adding one of these children recently relapsed and the local club was right there to help.

Currently, the Norfolk Shrine Club is helping two local children who are receiving care. Last year, the club took a Delhi child under its wing who needed care from Montreal's Shriners Hospital For Children. Volunteers offer transportation, meals and stays for ill children and their parents when they are in the process of receiving medical care. However, local members have been known not to reimburse themselves for out-of-pocket expenses.

"The money we collect for kids goes to kids," said Shriener John Johnson. "There's a lot of unsung heroes."

Delhi's unsung heroes — Pettinger, Ernst and Butler — have provided a sizable donation that will help the local Shriners' pop can collection. The local club turns in its pop can dumpster about six times a year. Each filled dumpster equates is worth \$900.

With their community project wrapped up, the boys were able to do the final part of the initiative — add another layer to Nobody's makeshift persona. The boys strung a pop tab belt around Nobody's waist and pinned an image of a pop can on his chest.

Fellow students in teacher Katy Luke's class have already been helping shape Nobody into a somebody, he now sports a baby blanket, a toy and a Band-Aid after students collected these supplies for local organizations.

"With this project, it really helps them understand that even as Grade 6 students, they can help the community," Luke said.

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