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Article

Who's Nobody?

Sometimes a program comes along that just does what it is supposed to do. The Stirling Rotary Club has such a program in their Who's Nobody program.

Who's Nobody is a Rotary-sponsored program designed to teach children to get involved in helping the community they live in in one way or another. In this case, Grade 7 students from Stirling Senior School became involved in projects involving animals, people or the environment.

The program at the Stirling Senior School, organized by teacher Stephanie Manderville, produced impressive results. This program starts out with the students having a doll which is genderless and of no particular race – a nobody.

The students from two Grade 7 classes then adopt projects of interest to them, in the three areas cited earlier. As they progress through their projects, they bring elements or pieces of that project back to the classroom and attach it to Mr. Nobody, who gradually takes on an identity and becomes a somebody.

As Manderville put it at Rotary's breakfast meeting Wednesday: "Mr. Nobody became a somebody through the program."

That's one segment of the program. On the other side, the young students did some pretty impressive projects within their field of interest, and some of them were pretty excited about their projects.

For example, four boys picked up garbage as their project to help the environment, another student built a birdhouse, one fed birds, another fixed a birdhouse, and another organized a Relay for Life.

The two young students who attended the Rotary meeting with Manderville – Jocelyn and Emily – had interesting experiences to tell about their projects.

Jocelyn organized a bake sale where she raised $97.80, which she then gave to the Canadian Wildlife Federation. As a result, she was given a certificate from the Canadian Wildlife Federation acknowledging her efforts and support of that organization.

Emily spent Family Day with two seniors in a local nursing home. One woman had dementia and was extremely hard to entertain or deal with because her attention span was very short. The other woman just wanted Emily to sit for 10 minutes while the woman looked at her because she had no family to visit.

"It felt kind of weird while that was happening, but I felt really good afterwards to know I was with her on Family Day," Emily told The Community Press.

And that of course is the beauty of this program – it gives some young students at a critical stage in their life the good feeling of contributing to their community in some small but perhaps significant way. That feeling could generate additional projects or actions throughout their lives. Few programs could strive for a more rewarding result.

Manderville said the program is good because it is so wide open and it allows the students to find an interest and to link it to the program. "There is a lot of initial (brainstorm(ing), then it basically runs itself,"she said of the program.

"We just let them run with it and it sort of feeds on itself. The children really get excited, especially after you have a couple of good projects. It's really fun and neat to see what they do."

One raised money for the Cancer Society, another helped in a day care, another taught others about dogsledding, and all learned that their interests could be used to advance everybody's appreciation of helping others to the point that a virtual nobody can really become a somebody. Stirling Rotarians can be justifiably proud of this program.

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