

# Children learn a lot from Nobody

**By Cecilia Nasmith**

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The four- and five-year-old pre-schoolers at the Alliance Family Centre in Cobourg are learning a lot from Nobody.

That may sound like a strange name for a child, but this Nobody has much to tell the children — even though it is only a doll who cannot really speak.

The Nobody doll is a faceless, genderless, identityless doll whom the children have set out to turn into somebody through kind acts and generosity, said Karen Victor, who teaches at the school with Linda Hayes.

Ms. Victor and Ms. Hayes encountered the idea at a professional conference, and obtained a Nobody doll with help from the Cobourg Rotary Club. Nobody dolls are currently being used in Plainville and Grafton public schools, but they took the idea back to Cobourg to set up the first Nobody program at a local day-care facility.

“We have noticed in recent years that some children lack compassion and empathy for others,” Ms. Victor said. “They are focused mainly on their own wants and needs, forgetting that there are others less fortunate than them in this world.”

By performing a few unselfish acts, they

have begun giving Nobody an identity.

“We have chosen a few kind things to show our children how we can do for others without expecting anything in return,” Ms. Victor said.

And they left a record of each good deed with Nobody.

For example, in September, they made a trip to Baker’s Cleaners to drop off some old coats they donated for the Coats For Kids campaign.

To commemorate the donation, they put a little coat on Nobody.

They collected food for the Fare Share Thanksgiving food drive, and Nobody gained a little shopping bag.

Nobody gained a smile on its face to reflect the happy grins the children produced when they sang for the members of the Young At Heart Club.

The class is also keeping a scrapbook to chronicle the adventure, and they hope the fun will continue.

“The children are very enthusiastic about Nobody,” Ms. Victor stated.

“They ask if Nobody’s watching and are being very good role models with each other, acting appropriately and using manners to make sure we teach Nobody to be a good somebody.

“They are quite proud of themselves and their efforts. We as teachers are very proud of them.”

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