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Steve MacLean student helps turn Nobody doll into a somebody

'Who is Nobody' project supports Carlington school

NEWS Dec 19, 2016 by Erin McCracken Ottawa South News







Steve Maclean Public School student Finn Uchman, 8, officially presents the items generated through his clothing drive to Kim MacDonald, principal at W.E. Gowling Public School in the west end on Dec. 15. - Tatum Uchman/Submitted

Finn Uchman knows what it takes to become a somebody

The eight-year-old was chomping at the bit for his turn to take home the 'nobody doll' for an assignment on

"Every Grade 3 class Miss Brouse does a Nobody Project to spread kindness," said Finn, who is in Tracy Brouse's class at Steve MacLean Public School in Riverside South. "You try to spread kindness to other people. You have to accomplish something, like donating clothes, donating food to the food bank.

'Nobody' is a denim cloth doll that has no face, but as the students take turns bringing it home and spearheading a kindness project, they each add a memento to the doll.

By the time the week-long projects wrap up in June, the doll will look like and become a somebody.

At this point in the process, Nobody has been out fitted with a T-shirt, and Finn recently added blue mittens torepresent the clothing drive he launched in support of students at W.E. Gowling Public School in Carlington, where Finn's mom, Tatum Uchman, teaches Grade 2.

"That represents your project perfectly," Brouse said

"Nobody comes as this blank denim doll and it doesn't have a gender, no ability, no skills, no ethnicity, no culture – that's the whole idea," she said. "No interests, no character. And so it's a character education project.

In addition to building character, the project requires students to do research, write a report and present their findings to their classmates.

"The main idea is to teach Nobody to be a somebody through these acts of kindness," said Brouse, a Barrhaven resident who was first introduced to the Who is Nobody? project six years ago and tried it out at Queen Elizabeth Public School in Ottawa's east end.



Her students over the years have spearheaded a variety of campaigns, including cleanups, recycling and collection drives for the food bank and the humane society

Finn got the idea to help the west-end school after he overheard his mom telling his dad about the need at her

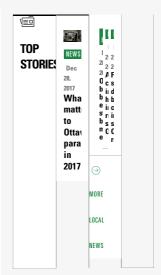
"Our principal put out an S.O.S. that we were missing certain sizes of stuff," Uchman said, especially for students in junior kindergarten to Grade 2. Many are new Canadians and refugees who are still settling into their new lives in Ottawa.

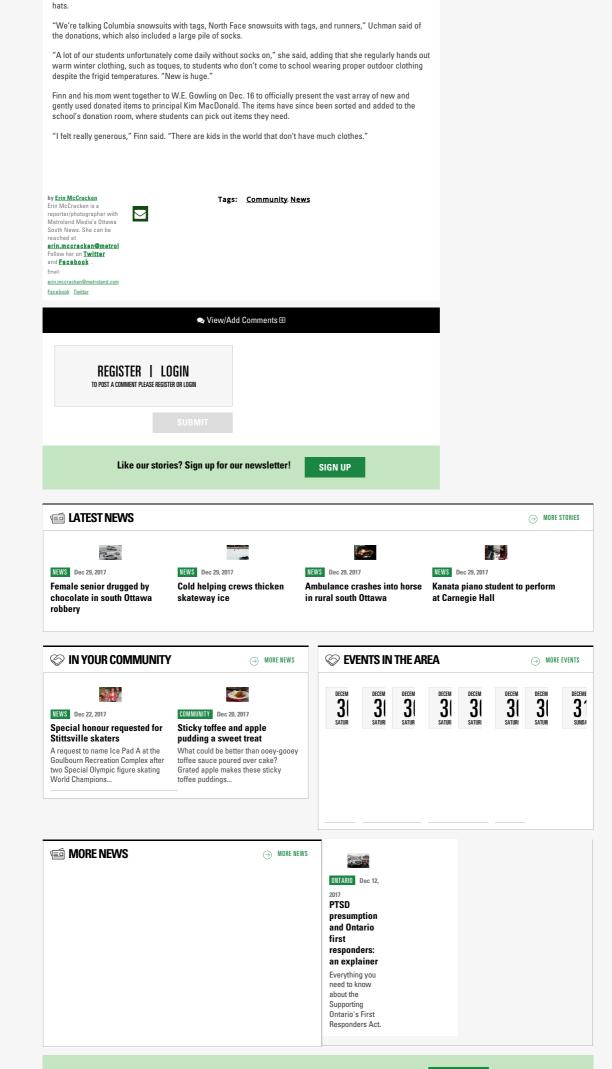
"That's kind of when the light bulb went off and he thought, 'I could do that for our Nobody project,'" Uchman

At first she wasn't sure the project would work, but then Finn wrote a post on the Riverside South Community $Association's \ Facebook\ page\ on\ Dec.\ 6.\ The\ response\ to\ his\ request\ for\ clothing\ donations\ was\ overwhelming,$ attracting 76 likes and 42 comments, many of them from Riverside South residents wanting to help

"This community is amazing," Uchman said, adding that many donors actually went out and purchased brand new clothing for the project.

One woman spent \$200 on new winter boots, and a friend purchased a pile of new mitts, scarves and winter





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