COMMUNITY

Grade 5 students transform Nobody into Somebody

By Dosi Cotroneo

How can a ten year old make a difference in their community? That was the question posed to 55 grade five students at North Gower Marlborough P.S. last fall during a surprise assembly with special guest Juno Award Nominee Glenn Marai, the singer/songwriter of the 'Who is Nobody?' character education project. The answer took the form of a ten-month journey of kind acts and selfless actions.

"With the support of our local Rotary Club and School Council, our Grade 5 classes were given the opportunity to participate in the 'Who is Nobody?' program," explained school principal Karen Deurloo. "Each student chose a personal project to help another living thing. A couple of students donated their long hair for wigs for cancer patients, while others worked at animal shelters, and some developed poster campaigns. The students certainly experienced the power of one - small acts make a big impact," said Deurloo. The Who is Nobody project (www.whoisnobody.com) invites children to see what

with a plain blue doll inside. Over the course of the school year, each student took the doll home, created their own service project and shared it with the class. When the doll named Nobody was returned to class, it bore a physical memento of the good deeds project. By the year's end, Nobody had become Somebody!

Projects ranged from a class penny drive for Free the Children, to helping an elderly neighbor, to lobbying for a safer game of hockey. Children donated time, money, canned goods, clothing, books, animals, bicycles and even their own hair to help others.

"I liked the project," said student Meghan Rust. "I donated clothing, juice boxes, and sleeping bags to Ottawa's homeless by doing chores at home to raise money." Meghan then cut out a little sleeping bag and pinned it on the Nobody doll.

Student Kaitlyn Yates knit hats for Burmese refugees living in Ottawa. "They needed hats to stay warm in our climate, so I followed my head and set my heart to action to help them," said Kaitlyn.

Mackenzie Williamson

They helped turn Nobody into Somebody with their many selfless acts, not only in the local community, but also across the globe. Pictured (from left to right) with the now Somebody dolls are grade 5 teachers Leslie Mott (left) and Sarah Newman (far right) with students Devin Larocque, Grant Murison, and Malcolm MacEachern, Kaitlyn Naphan (front left), Christina Chin, Emma Duff, Kaitlyn Yates, and Meghan Rust.

Hospital's Civic Campus cozy and warm, while student Grant Murison planted trees in his backyard to help provide more oxygen. He did chores around his neighborhood and donated children's clothing to the Salvation Army. "I pinned a heart on the doll to represent my efforts," he said.

Kaitlyn Naphan cut off 10 inches of her hair and donated it to an organization that makes wigs for

some of my hair onto the hat," she said.

Christina Chin spearheaded a swim-a-thon that helped raise money and awareness about the desperate need for education for the young girls in Afghanistan. Her efforts raised over $1,000, and Nobody was returned to school with a sticker that said Education=Peace.

Devon Larocque started a petition in the hopes of

Concerned for the safety of his neighborhood, he presented the petition to Rideau-Goulbourn councilor Glenn Brooks, who will deliver the petition to City staff.

On the afternoon of Wed., June 18, Grade 5 teachers Leslie Mott and Sarah Newman invited the Who is Nobody sponsors, the Rotary Club of Nepean-Kanata, the North Gower

the students share their stories and view their projects. The presentation included a brief video, the sharing of scrapbooks, and a presentation of the Free the Children donation.

The staff and students of North Gower Marlborough Public School want to enlist the help of the community to help spread their message: "Everyone is a somebody and we can all make a difference!"