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Here's how Stayner students learn about positive character traits

COMMUNITY Jun 26, 2019 by Ian Adams Wasaga Sun



Tori Collicutt (left), Gabby Nixon, Jenna Proud, Elise Carlson, Helena Pattison, Kayla Stevenson, and Emily Forster took part in the Who is Nobody program, in Stayner Collegiate's Exploring Family Studies class. - Ian Adams/Torstar

With the right character traits, everybody can become a somebody.

This is the fifth year Stephanie Rusnak has used the Who is Nobody program (www.whoisnobody.com) in her Grade 9 exploring family studies class to teach students how to make a positive contribution to the community.

"Nobody" is a featureless fabric doll created as a character education program by a Toronto teacher in 2002 for grades 1 through 12.

Throughout the semester, students create 3D representations of the projects they undertake, and add them to Nobody.

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Stayner students learn character traits from 'Nobody'

"We want to teach Nobody to become somebody by learning positive character traits," said Rusnak, a social science and humanities teacher at Stayner Collegiate Institute.

This year's projects by the students included a community cleanup on the town's trail system, spending time with residents at Blue Mountain Manor, a coin drive for the women's crisis shelter My Friend's House, and a car wash to raise money for the school's life skills program as a show of support for students with autism.

"When we visited (the life skills program) to propose this idea, we noticed there wasn't much assistance, many resources to help them grow and develop," said student Helena Pattison. "It kind of hit home, and I felt really good about doing it."

Rusnak said that in five years of doing the Nobody program, it has become "very individual to the students in the group and what their areas of interest are."

The students start the semester by brainstorming areas in which they can help the community.

"It's unique to each time we do it — it doesn't get dry, it's exciting to see the students excited about doing something positive, and it's cool to hear that the community notices the positive things the kids are doing," Rusnak said.

Student Emily Forster was part of the group that organized the community cleanup.

"It was a good cause because most of us live in Stayner, and walking around we noticed there was a lot of areas where garbage collected," she said. "It's not good to see that around town, in such a small, beautiful town like Stayner.

"We wanted to do something about it because it looked like nothing was being done. It was a good experience for everyone to not only help the environment, and it was a bonding exercise for all of us."



by Ian Adams
Ian Adams is a reporter for Simcoe.com, covering community news and events throughout south Georgian Bay, and municipal councils in Collingwood and Wasaga Beach.



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