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Stayner students learn right character traits from Who is Nobody program

COMMUNITY Nov 11, 2016 by Ian Adams Wasaga Sun



Clearview Food Bank coordinator Pam Royal gives Stayner Collegiate students, from left, Savannah Strong, Gracie Kennedy, Mackenna LaChapelle and Taylor Glenn, a rundown on the services provided by the food bank. Tuesday, Nov. 8, 2016. - Ian Adams/Metroland

A fabric doll that's a centrepiece to Stephanie Rusnak's Exploring Family Studies class spent part of Tuesday morning trudging to the food bank.

But in that 15-minute walk between Stayner Collegiate to the Clearview Food Bank, the students carrying that doll were taking the first steps to finding out what it takes for a 'nobody' to become a 'somebody'.

It's the third year Rusnak has used the Who Is Nobody program to teach character traits to her charges. The students have come up with their own individual projects, as a class project the students raised more than \$500 by selling Fresh from the Farm produce bundles to spend on food and other items for the food bank.

On Tuesday, the students delivered the items, and got a lesson from food bank coordinator Pam Royal on the level of need in the community.

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Stayner students learn character traits from 'Nobody'

"I didn't realize how many families in the community needed food. I knew about the food bank, but I didn't know where it was or how much people used it," said student Grace Millsap.

Rusnak said this particular exercise brought home to the students specific character traits such as kindness, caring, and having concern for other people.

"We're hoping that people recognize we live in a community, and it's important to make sure people experience all that everybody else does — that people are treated equally and have access to health and food and being able to provide for others, that there's responsibility of caring for others in the community, that we look after our own," she said. "The students have really embraced that."

The Nobody doll arrives to class in a nondescript brown 'suitcase' and is considered genderless. Throughout the semester, the students will affix three-dimensional representations of their personal projects.

Most of the students are still working on a focus to their projects. Brookelynn Bage and Katherine Rainbird-Kendrick plan to help The Door youth centre out with renovation work at its new location.

"We picked it because The Door is trying help the youth work through their mental and physical issues, and we wanted to help (the renovations) go quicker so it can open earlier," said Rainbird-Kendrick.

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To represent the class project, the doll is now wearing a T-shirt with Canada's food guide on the front. Rusnak said the food bank project was about creating awareness and educating on how important it is to eat fruits and vegetables, and learning the responsibility of caring for the community.

"I think it's neat to see how the kids have embraced the project and have stepped up," Rusnak said. "They get creative and do things that, when I introduce the project, some of them their eyes light up and ideas come to mind right away, but others can feel intimidated by the project."

She has also geared it to reflect the 'Stayner' experience.

"The whole idea is to keep it local and give them an idea to look for a need and make sure they're not just thinking of something that would be a good idea and doing it, but actually picking something where there is a need so that can focus on that, recognize the need and then roll up their sleeves and figure out what they can

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do about it," she said. "Overall it's been a great program. I love the fact if we share this with the community, we get positive feedback, it's excellent PR for these kids."

"Sometimes I think teens get a bad rap, so this is a good way for them step out into the community and let other people see they're great kids and they're willing to do stuff."

In January, the students will wrap up the program with a class celebration.

"The celebration is a cool thing so they can see what they've accomplished," Rusnak said.

For more information on the Who Is Nobody character education program, go to www.whoisnobody.com.



by **Ian Adams**
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