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From Nobody, to Somebody

By Miriam King

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The suitcase arrived in Renata Woods' Grade 1-2 class at Marie of the Incarnation School, addressed to "Everybody", from "Nobody."

The students didn't know what to make of it, especially when they opened the suitcase and discovered a stuffed denim doll - with no clothes, no face, no history.

It was "Nobody" and, says Woods, "We didn't know anything about Nobody."

The challenge was "to make Nobody into "Somebody"," by making a difference in someone's life. The young students each had a turn to take Nobody home for a week, keeping a journal of what they did and learned together. At the end of the week, they brought Nobody back to the classroom, attaching a memento of their activities together.

With Nicholas, "Nobody" donated clothes to the Salvation Army, and learned about compassion and sharing.

With Sophia, Nobody joined Sparks, and made new friends.

Nobody donated toys to Goodwill and learned how to play hockey, "and how to be a good sport," with Ethan.

Nobody helped Nathan donate to the Cancer Society - and get his stitches out.

Nobody shovelled a driveway for a neighbour, helped buy supplies for a kindergarten class, donated to Diabetes, Goodwill and the food bank, learned to play baseball, and in the process, became a sharing, caring person.

"We've made a difference in Nobody's life, to make Nobody a Somebody," said Woods - and along the way, her students learned a lot about themselves, and making a difference in the lives of others.

"Who is Nobody?" is a character education program, that has been introduced in schools across Canada and the U.S., with the support of local Rotary Clubs. Students from grades 1 to 12 have used the stuffed doll as a tool to express their unique interests and abilities, and discover their ability to make a difference in their communities.

The Rotary Club of Bradford sponsored the program at Marie of the Incarnation School.



Marie of the Incarnation Catholic School teacher Renata Woods with her Grade 1-2 class - and Nobody, who became Somebody.



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