



Monthly Newsletter



Working locally (Calgary, Alberta) to stop the cycle of poverty for the children

September 2008, Edition 29

“A little encouragement goes a long way.”

- Dame Jane Goodall

Did you know?

October 17, 2008 is National 'Me To We' Day. National 'Me To We' Day is a day of awareness sponsored by Free The Children. Free The Children is the world's largest network of children helping children through education, with more than one million youth involved in innovative education and development programs in 45 countries. The primary goals of the organization are to free children from poverty and exploitation and free young people from the notion that they are powerless to affect positive change in the world. www.freethechildren.com

Powerless? Not a Chance

By Carla Mohler Specht

What can I do to affect positive change in the world when I don't even have enough time to eat lunch most days? How does the soccer/hockey mom or dad running from activity to activity with their kids between work and sleep commit to any volunteer time? What about those without the financial ability to assist through donations? What can we do? I don't have time ... I can't make an impact ... I won't bother ... Ahh ... but you can make a difference. It may seem small and inconsequential, but its not. Haven't we been told to save our pennies and the dollars will take care of themselves. Can the same thing apply to our actions?

The real question is – how important is it to build a world that has compassion, a world that is caring and a world that feels like a community. I am that soccer mom. I feel your lack of sleep, unending lists of things to do, wanting to make a change in the world and sometimes feeling helpless. I know that I have passion to make a difference in the world. I want to live where people who are different are still accepted. I want to live in a world with peace and without suffering. I want to live knowing that I am leaving a legacy for my children. Let me share my story of what I do to help, and yes it does make a difference.

Taking my parental responsibilities beyond providing my children with basic necessities into the realm of providing

them with the right tools to grow up to be caring, compassionate citizens in a global community is an important step. Encourage people to step beyond their comfort level and try something new and different. Encourage your children to “pursue what is in their heart”.

We recycle, we get involved in the school, we are block parents, we encourage good sportsmanlike behavior, we defend the victim and discourage the bully, we garage sale items so that they don't end up in our landfill. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. I try hard to really listen to my children when they talk, to my spouse, to my family and to my friends. It can make an impact and it doesn't take extra time or money. We try to walk our talk for our children, so that we are good role models. But what else?

When we start to ask questions and create conversations, we are affecting positive change. People will take these conversations and in whatever way works for them, move their own lives to consider their intentions in their life and think twice about their actions. My association with ***children without poverty*** has allowed for this type of influence and support in the community. It takes me 3 hours per month, and gets me out of the office for lunch – which is a good thing for me.

These may not seem like things that affect our world today, but, over time, we can help to build a society that thinks twice about what they are doing and what the impact will be longer term.

Hands in your pocket

The Calgary Board of Education (**CBE**), in 2006, crafted our community's values into five *Ends* statements. These Ends set the direction for the CBE's work in accordance with the wishes of Calgarians. The Ends provide the framework for their decision-making, planning, programming and monitoring of progress. Ends 3 focuses on Citizenship. The Board interprets Citizenship to mean that “each student will be a responsible citizen by being an informed and involved member in his or her local, national and global communities.” Our schools provide students with a multitude of opportunities to develop the knowledge and experience to build their own thoughtful views on local, national and global issues. Students seek information, consider conflicting discourse, reflect and use critical thinking. Time is allotted for wrestling in-depth with differing points of view and for getting involved in real-life actions that make a difference. (<http://www.cbe.ab.ca/aboutus/schoolinsert/frommay06.pdf>)

What is your child's school doing to reflect this End? What might you do to assist? Could you arrange a box for donations of winter coats for children in need? Blankets for the homeless? Or just talking with your kids about some ideas and having them lead an idea

To have people added/removed from the distribution list or to provide comments, please respond to:

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