Penny Harvest student leaders learn “what love feels like.”

Posted on March 3, 2010 by Kathleen Penna

A circle of nervous and excited faces stared back at me as I explained with our school’s Dean, Devon McColley-Hopkins, that they were there to represent the school. Cedar Valley Community School officially started our Penny Harvest Roundtable a few weeks ago. Penny Harvest students knew it was their large responsibility to decide how to donate the $1,000 the student group was allocated to grant to area non-profits, and everyone was eager to get to work.

Washington Reading Corps team members Andrea and Kevin display the Rainbow of Caring

While Penny Harvest student leaders make all the big decisions, every student’s voice was heard. All classes were given the opportunity to discuss important issues in their community. They then picked the issue they cared the most about and Penny Harvest student leaders assembled the classes’ picks into a “Rainbow of Caring.”

After discussing philanthropy, community, and the issues that the school picked, Penny Harvest student leaders narrowed their list down to four key issues: animal welfare, Haiti relief, hunger, and homelessness.

Penny Harvest student leaders were sent to learn more about the issues and what they could do to fix them. This sparked something important in a few students. Falicity Benson originally joined Penny Harvest because she was passionate about animals and wanted to help.

“I think it’s not O.K. – they don’t deserve to get abused or be hungry. Lots of animals are left at shelters, sometimes hurt, sometimes they need surgery. They need money to help them,” she advocated.
So, Falicity’s way of helping has gone from advocating for animals in Penny Harvest meetings to doing research on her own. She is now independently working on packets of information to pass out in order to raise awareness of issues that animals face.

Falicity displays her information packets

She’s not the only one inspired to make a difference. Fourth grade Leader Chris also made fliers about Haiti and animal welfare to share with his class. Students outside of Penny Harvest have also started paying attention. One student offered to print Falicity’s materials with her color printer at home. Additionally, students gather in the morning to look at the fliers and packets and discuss issues. This is Falicity’s goal.

 “[I want to] help them understand that animals are important too. If they pay attention and help, then they will actually know what love feels like,” she said.

And how does love feel? “It feels really good.”

LINK: http://solidgroundblog.wordpress.com/2010/03/03/penny-harvest-leaders-learn-what-love-feels-like/