I attended the Penny Harvest Youth Philanthropy Summit yesterday at the Seattle Center. Caregiving may keep me from many events, but no way was I going to miss this. My granddaughter's on the youth board and I went as a chaperone.

Penny Harvest is one of 30 programs sponsored by Solid Ground, a community service organization (that some might remember as the Fremont Public Association). Now based in Seattle's Wallingford neighborhood, Solid Ground helps "over 38,000 households each year to overcome poverty and build better futures throughout King County and beyond."

Penny Harvest is awesome, I can tell you. I served lunch. I saw. I sat in on student-run caucuses, one led by my eleven-year old granddaughter. I watched as groups of children developed arguments to promote their choices of causes to give money to: homelessness, hunger, Haiti, the environment, animal and child abuse. I was at the summit from 9 am until 2 pm and not once was there a disturbance, much less a fight among the kids. Our legislators should do as well.

Children from all different walks of life, from private and public schools, from elementary school through high school, from every religion and color of the rainbow together learning skills to become leaders in their communities. A parent couldn't ask for more, not from neighborhood activists nor from teachers who guide these kids to learn in the context of public and global need.

I'm worried that due to the economic downturn, the program will have to shut its doors and the youth board that was created yesterday won't be able to serve next year. I spend a lot of my time with the elderly, and the sick elderly, as you well know. These folks are some of our weakest links, those who need the most from the rest of us. The kids I observed at Penny Harvest Youth Philanthropy Summit are already in the business of helping our weakest links. Let us adults help them.

Don't throw away your pennies. Send them, or your checks, to Penny Harvest c/o Solid Ground 1501 North 45th Street Seattle, WA 98103-6708

Or donate on line. Do this in honor of Abe Schweid. He would love it.

Thanks for stopping by,

Esther