Every Penny Counts

By Yuri Kim 14 January 2010

Do you have pennies lying around? I’ve got them everywhere: in my car, at the office, and in my jacket pockets. Well, a group of local students is taking those pennies and making change – in our community.

Students from 65 schools recently collected more than 14 tons pennies totaling $78,836.45! That’s a 22% increase over last year. That’s pretty amazing and what’s even better is that the students get to decide how to invest those each and every one of those pennies in the community.

The program that makes this all happen is the Penny Harvest. The Penny Harvest is an awesome youth philanthropy program where Elementary / Junior High school students collect pennies, survey the needs of the community, and then award grants to those in need.

You’re probably thinking to yourself (as I first did), “Aw, what a nice little program for the kids” and just figure the amount they raise is nominal. But as you read earlier, they make a huge impact – a $78,000 impact.

After the kids raise money, they then research community needs, meet with local organizations, and as a group decide where the money they raised will go. In the end, dozens of grants are doled out for issues such as elder care, Basic Needs, and homelessness.

Penny Harvest is one of those really cool programs that’s so obviously good, it’s impossible to not like. Kids raising money, thinking about important issues, and making a difference in the community — I mean, come on.

Like many programs, Penny Harvest is struggling in these tight financial times. While they are raising more pennies than ever, they need funds to support the staff who work directly with the students. The Seattle-area Penny Harvest is building the next generation of philanthropic leaders.
and I hope they can continue to raise pennies. Learn more about the Penny Harvest Program and consider becoming a Harvest Hero!

Really, the Penny Harvest is totally worth rooting for. If not for the values instilled on the students, or the impact it makes in our community, then for the ridiculous (in a good way) kids videos it leads to, which you can watch below.