

Little Hands Make a Big Difference

By Christine Parkhurst

Summer Camp kids from Elkhart's Growing Kids Learning Center became an inspiration to adults when they wholeheartedly took part in a supply drive on July 18 at the Feed the Children center in Elkhart. The field trip was an initiative to help kids think of others.



"At Growing Kids we feel we have a responsibility to teach the children about children less fortunate than them and about community, working together, communicating, being well organized and so much more," said Carla Putrich, Marketing Director.

Dana Query, a Summer Camp teacher, talked about how well the kids worked together to pack boxes. A group of about 50 children participated in the effort, the younger set filling boxes with hygiene products while the older ones filled boxes with food. The kids also worked together to pack boxes of books.

"I have never been so proud of a group of kids than yesterday," said Dana, "I watched a 5-year-old child help another 5-year-old child count and keep track of how many books were needed to go in each box while she did her own job. She praised that child and gave him words of encouragement."

Putrich noted one little girl, age 5, demonstrate great leadership and motivation skills as she cheered a group of her peers, saying, "Come on guys we can do this. We just need one more book!"

Where were all of these boxes going? One of the children asked if the adults were going to sell the products they had packed. Darlene Anderson, staff member at Feed the Children, took this opportunity to give a geography lesson, noted Putrich.

"The woman sat the kids down and moved a small toy truck all around a map to show the children where all the boxes they helped pack were going to go," she said. The kids worked for two hours that day, with adults barely able to keep up with the taping. Dana said with the combined efforts of Camp A (the younger kids) and Camp B (the older kids), 464 boxes were successfully packed for distribution to Detroit.

The trip was also fun, reported teachers, because the kids were asking when they could come back and do it again!

On Aug. 10, from 4-6 pm, Growing Kids Learning Center in Elkhart will have a visit from members of Safe Kids of Elkhart County, who will offer a free car seat safety inspection. This event will be open to the public. Safe Kids visited the Center on July 13 and taught about boat safety, sun safety and much more. The kids crawled through a smoke house, played safety bingo and met a police dog during the visit.

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