

## **Kids Contribute to ShareNet**

Every spring Wolfle Elementary selects a charity to benefit from their annual Penny Drive. This year for the first time ever two charities were chosen, ShareNet and the Snow Leopard Trust. School staff suggested possible recipients and made a presentation to Wolfle's Building Leadership Team (BLT), who finalized selections.

Students and staff promoted the Penny Drive in the community, and soon the coins (and larger amounts) were rolling in, first filling two big pickle jars in the school display case, then a clear bucket, then a large fish bowl, and finally an aquarium. Being able to see the results on display and growing daily was exciting, and made everyone try even harder to get donations. Many grandmas and grandpas, aunts, uncles, and cousins emptied their pockets or change jars to help the kids out.

For the first time that anyone could remember, local residents came in off the street to donate, responding to Wolfle's reader board, and the school received phone calls wondering if it was too late to donate. The PTA had the task of taking the huge load of coins to the bank for processing. ShareNet thanks Wolfe Elementary School for their tremendous effort; we are honored to be chosen and we know the snow leopards are too.

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At Crosspoint Academy, Mrs. Fontenot's third grade class was presented with a leadership challenge to "Change things that are wrong, help those who need help, make a difference, and leave your footprint on the world." The project had to be student-inspired, volunteer-only, and not cost their parents much money. Some wondered, could they do it, did the students at that age have the capability? Their teacher knew they could. Each child began planning their project in January, developing a goal and plan of action.

Catie Landeen decided her project would benefit ShareNet. Her goal was to collect 100 cans of food. Catie worked hard to prepare for her project, creating posters and decorating her wagon to advertise the event. She composed a speech to read to neighbors she approached, hoping they would become donors. Then she went door to door collecting food in her community.

Neighbors impressed by Catie's earnest commitment rallied behind her project helping those in need through ShareNet. With Catie's enthusiasm and careful planning, she easily surpassed her goal of 100 cans, eventually reaching 128! Catie was so grateful for the support that she made and delivered Thank You cards to those who donated. On March 11, Catie and her Mom delivered the food (more than a wagon full!) to ShareNet, where they had a kind of "field trip" onsite, getting a full tour and learning more about how ShareNet serves the community.

Now Catie must create a presentation for her class about how her project worked, and how it has influenced her life. When asked what she accomplished, Catie said, "I accomplished helping people. I collected food from very nice people in my

neighborhood. I collected 128 food items to give ShareNet.” She also stated that, “Collecting food for people made me feel very good. It made me feel like I could help others and make a difference.” Now Catie wants to help ShareNet on an ongoing basis, and has set a new goal spanning several months.

Both Wolfle Elementary School and Catie’s efforts are proof that instilling service in childhood is a gift for all. Statistics show children who learn volunteering early are far more likely to be service-oriented in adulthood, often continuing to serve lifelong. The (not so) secret volunteers know is that service enriches the person giving as much as it does the persons receiving.