

Helping You Be The Change

The students and parents at Rosedale Junior Public School in downtown Toronto made change a reality for hundreds of less fortunate children in Sierra Leone. On Valentine's Day the grade 6 students of Bessie Anastopoulos's class held a Dance-a-Thon to raise money for the Free the Children foundation's Adopt a Village campaign. Their aim was to raise enough money to build a one-classroom school in Africa. With parents' support and enthusiasm they exceeded the \$6,500 needed to build the school in a village in Sierra Leone, Africa. The families and supporters of Rosedale outdid themselves and their generosity helped to raise \$11,091!

Ms. Anastopoulos was able to inspire the community to contribute generously by choosing a fund that is highly respected and locally developed. Craig Kielberger runs Free the Children in a nearby community (Cabbagetown). He created the foundation after working for many years to create awareness of child labour around the world. Inspired also by the OLA award-winning learning resource "Be the Change," Ms. Anastopoulos was able to teach the importance of world issues concerning children and what her students could actually do to help.

The students at Rosedale collected donations by asking friends and family to sponsor their participation in a Dance-a-Thon that was held in the school gymnasium. Surrounded by great decorations, strobe lights, and lively dance music via a disc jockey, the students and staff jived and grooved the day away. It was a great party, one that the students have requested happen annually.

After careful collection of all donations, the realization of such a large final amount was overwhelming to the grade 6 class and their teacher. Ms. Anastopoulos made sure that the efforts of her class and school were recognized. Most importantly, the Free the Children representative worked with her class to decide how the money would be spent. In the end, the

Students at Rosedale Made "The Change" Happen!

Sandra Anderson

class decided that the money would be spent in the following way:

- \$6,500 – to build a one-classroom school;
- \$1,500 – to furnish one classroom;
- \$1,500 – to support one teacher's salary and training for one year;
- \$1,500 – to provide teaching resources for one classroom;
- \$91.68 – to provide school supplies for the children.

In a thank you letter to the school, Dianna Chan, International Projects Co-ordinator wrote, "The students at Rosedale Junior Public School are truly shining examples of the power of young people to make positive changes and reach out in solidarity to help children all over the world. You should all be very proud of your efforts and achievements, as they truly have made a difference in the world and in the lives of children! Thank you so much for all your hard work!"

One very proud teacher and one very generous community have made change possible for children in Sierra Leone. Well done Rosedale! As for the students at Rosedale, well, they all want to do it again next year. ■