N.K. school triples fundraising for Africa

A close relationship with a child in Malawi led a small North Kildonan elementary school to achieve the tremendous feat of collecting $2,578.72.

Emerson School's 221 students collected the money without hosting a large fundraising event and, if divided per the number of children in the elementary school, it would be almost $12 per child.

The 2006 UNICEF campaign focused on raising money to build schools in the African country of Malawi.

As it turns out, Emerson School has a foster child named Paulo who lives in Malawi and who corresponds with the students.

"We tied the two things together," said Emerson's principal Deb Thompson, adding that last year's UNICEF orange box campaign brought in $950.

"We were thinking of Paulo and the children there and through UNICEF to build schools in Malawi."

Thompson said the school's entire Grade 4 class acted as ambassadors, going to different classrooms and speaking to fellow students about the importance of donating.

Each child who donated placed a paper "brick" on the drawing of a building placed on a bulletin board.

Thompson said she is very happy with efforts of her students and the community that supported them.

"I honestly think it was the children's enthusiasm for reaching out to Africa," she said.

"We've had Paulo as our foster child about five years. He's 12 now, so over the years we've been in close contact with him."

This year, UNICEF changed the way it collected money by eliminated the orange collection boxes children used to take with them while trick-or-treating during Halloween night.

Instead, and for the safety of the children, UNICEF opted to let schools decide how to best fundraise.

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