



News Release

St. Martin de Porres School, Red Deer and District Community Foundation partner to introduce philanthropy to students

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Grade 5 students at St. Martin de Porres School have spent the last few months learning about the importance of making a positive impact in their community. Their hard work culminated in a total donation of \$3,700 to two local charities earlier this month.

Since 2018, St. Martin students have been active participants in the Red Deer and District Community Foundation's Youth in Philanthropy program. This initiative introduces students to the concept of philanthropy and provides hands-on opportunities to explore and support local charities. Each participating school receives \$500 from the Foundation to deliver small grants to local charities, and students are tasked with raising \$250 to reinvest into the Youth in Philanthropy Endowment Fund.

This year, the program began with a visit from Foundation Executive Director Erin Peden on February 27. Peden educated the students on philanthropy, endowment funds, and financial literacy.

"It sparks their interest in what a volunteer and philanthropist will be," said Linda Zazula, a Grade 5 teacher at the school.

Students researched local charities, considering their passions and community connections. They then presented their findings to their peers, who voted on the most compelling presentations.

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“They have to summarize their thoughts into a presentation that will keep people engaged,” said Kelsey Paetz, Grade 5 teacher. “The impact of hearing everybody’s story sparks the need and compassion to give back.”

The students raised money through a public art sale at the Velvet Olive in March and April, with additional grades contributing through a spring market and bake sale. These efforts raised \$3,200, allowing the students to donate \$1,850 each to Breast Cancer Canada and Ned’s Wish at an assembly on May 13.

Since its introduction in 2017, the Red Deer and District Community Foundation’s Youth in Philanthropy Project has raised \$17,000 for local charities, with St. Martin students contributing \$15,000 - or 88 percent - of that total.

“It’s been a ripple effect,” said Paetz. “As Erin told the students, ‘When you throw a pebble into a lake, you can see the ripples. It starts to affect everyone around you.’ Giving is contagious.”

St. Martin de Porres School Principal Dorice de Champlain said the students' dedication and compassion were displayed throughout the entire project.

"It's inspiring to see them grow not only as learners but also as empathetic individuals who understand the importance of giving back to their community. This program has truly inspired a passion for philanthropy in our students, and we are proud of the positive impact they have made."

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