



Service Learning News

2.23.09

by Judy Brookhart and Amanda Kuhlen

Dear Parents,

Many of you will remember that last summer a group of middle-schoolers traveled with Judy to Heifer Ranch in central Arkansas. The ranch is the educational branch of Heifer International, a local, national and international organization that works to end hunger and care for the earth. Their motto is "Pass on the Gift," which fits very well with the focus of Old Trail School's service learning program. When we all returned to Ohio after this experience, everyone, adults and students alike, asked, "How can we help. How can we make a change in the world?"



As we examine the myriad opportunities we have to help in these challenging times, an organization that believes giving animals instead of money encourages self-reliance is one that catches our attention. We say that for a couple of reasons – first, encouraging self-sufficiency, resilience, sustainability and partnership with those in poverty fits wonderfully with our School's mission. Second, even the youngest children can relate to giving someone an animal!

So... we are launching a school-wide fund drive, class by class and grade by grade. It will be fun to watch what creative possibilities emerge from brainstorming among students. We have already heard about a car wash (if the weather gets warmer), bake sales, a jewelry boutique, students offering to do chores at home for change, reading books for bucks and so on. Maybe you can help your child come up with an idea which he or she can share with classmates. However, there should be some service involved in the raising of every dollar. No wacky-hair-days, which are fun but just mean mom or dad paying a dollar for an opportunity to sport a pink hairstyle.



Then watch the animals arrive in the barnyard! We will have a bulletin board in the dining room with a barn and a fence for the animals to reside in harmony. You may see cows... sheep... camels... oxen... water buffalo... pigs... bees in hives... goats... donkeys... ducks... rabbits... guinea pigs... geese... chickens... and llamas... all representing choices that Old Trail School students make as they raise the money for these healthy, hardy animals to go forth and multiply, improving the lives of men, women and children around the world and in the United States!

Serving together,

Judy & Amanda