

Aurora's 'Kids with Compassion' are on track for 2013 goals



By Brock Weir

Are you looking for an easy way to get rid of some of the glass beer and wine bottles that may have been accumulating over the winter?

Keep your eyes peeled for a red wagon near you.

Aurora's Butt Family are at it again, going into their second year of collecting local empties to return to the LCBO and Beer Stores, collecting funds to support children living in poverty through Compassion International, a Christian-based aid organization.

Marisa, Alana, and Michael hit the streets in Aurora on Thursday morning making their rounds and in a short period of time had filled their shiny, new purpose-built red wagon with over eight cases of beer bottles, a bucket load of beer cans, and a few wine bottles here and there ? and that was just from Steckley Street and Snedden Avenue.

The early morning windfall ? and they weren't quite half way through their morning route ? is a good indication their increased efforts to raise funds for Compassion are well underway.

Last year, support from their thirsty neighbours and the community at large helped to raise over \$1,200 for Compassion, to buy livestock, wells, and other gifts for overseas villages, collecting nearly 10,000 items overall.

Parents Roy and Angela came up with the idea to instill their children with the philosophy of giving back to others, but also getting them to do something more proactive than just handing over some cash. Daughter Marisa was eager to get on board and led the way for their siblings. Humanitarian efforts in this family, however, are not limited to bottle collection, but also sponsoring children from Nicaragua to Ghana to Indonesia.

Based on far exceeding their \$1,000 goal last year, they have decided to up the ante, doubling their efforts with a goal of \$2,000, by extending their routes and reaching out through social media, one of the key drivers of their success last year.

'We have had a lot of people contacting us to say they had read about is in [last year's] article,' said Roy, pausing while his kids rooted around in recycling boxes for their booty. 'We have a lot of people now around the neighbourhood who are helping us and even right near the neighbourhood from a number of blocks away are just dropping things off on our porch right now.

'We're getting a little bit more awareness on our Facebook page and now we have this new wagon which was donated by one of our supporters after one of our carts broke down and we have had signs done for free. We decided to have signage put on the wagon we approached 21st Century Signs in Newmarket who produced without charge. Digital Copy Centre in Aurora donated the printing for

all the thank you cards we delivered to our 2012 supporters. And of course, all the people who email us that they have empties ? it's incredible.?

With the first quarter of the year just wrapped up, the family is right on track, collecting just over \$500 of their ultimate goal so far. They are also reaching out and trying to make connections with local restaurants and pubs to strike a deal on their empty bottles.

?Everybody who hears about us is willing to help out so I just want to keep spreading that word and getting more people involved,? said Roy. ?We're trying to turn it into a real community kind of thing where everyone is helping out.

?Seeing an idea played out to fruition over time is amazing. Last year we never thought we'd hit \$1,000. We needed to strive for something and we did it. Seeing our children actively participating in this project every week is amazing ? especially over the winter. We had some pretty cold days that were in need of a lot of hot chocolate afterward. We are so proud of them.

?Another real joy is to be recognized on the street and have someone call out to us and say ?hi, we have some bottles that we have been saving in our garage for you!' It's really special to think that people take time from their busy schedules to put items aside for us.?

For more information on the kids' ?Kids with Compassion? campaign, visit www.kidswithcompassion.com.