

Free the Children club wants your junk to lead the future for Kenyan families



By Brock Weir

Cardinal Carter CHS students know all too well the simple truth behind ?one man's trash is another man's treasure.? In fact, it goes down to the very root of what they are doing.

When Craig and Marc Kielburger began laying the foundations of their celebrated charity as children themselves, they started small: garage sales to raise money for kids in need around the world.

This year, Cardinal Carter's Free the Children Club has taken inspiration from those early days of their mission to put a new spin on their annual e-waste collection day.

The club will host their collection next Saturday, May 30, gathering unwanted televisions, computers, VCRs and a variety of other electronic gadgets, all the while raising money to benefit children and families in Kenya.

With a goal of raising \$5,000, they have expanded their umbrella from a simple e-waste day, in which the school earns four cents for every pound of e-waste collected, to also include a garage sale of items amassed from the Cardinal Carter community and beyond.

?This is one of the first things Craig Kielburger did and that just inspired us,? says Cardinal Carter student Yazmeen Kanji. ?So far, we have collected a decent amount and a lot of really nice paintings and some home decorations.?

Also mounting are books and a few nice antiques.

Through their ongoing efforts, including in-school fundraisers, the club is now \$2,400 into their \$5,000 goal.

These initiatives have included participating in the We Are Silent campaign, where students buy in to take a vow of silence throughout the school day to highlight human rights issues around the globe, as well as initiatives from local businesses, such as Menchie's, who have donated a portion of their sales to the cause.

?It was my first time [doing the We Are Silent] campaign and it was a little bit difficult, but it made it that much easier knowing the purpose of why we were doing it,? says student Aarzoo Chennan.

Adds Yazmeen: ?I have been doing it for quite a while now and I have learned that because everyone has an individual cause ? and your cause might be bullying or girls around the world who don't have the right to an education ? when you put yourselves in those situations, and you think of someone's personal life in that matter, you think that is a really good reason to be silent for an entire day.?

Whether bullying, or the education of girls, these were all topics up for consideration when the Free the Children Club considered causes to benefit from their e-waste collection day. It was a tight vote, but at the end of the day, efforts to bring clean water to remote villages won the day.

When you have access to clean water, it helps the rest to flow, say Yazmeen and Aarzoo.

?Water facilities are really important,? says Yazmeen. ?For children, instead of going to school, they are walking long distances to get water and we think that is the basis of everything. If you have clean water, you can have a healthy lifestyle, good hygiene, and then have the opportunity to go to school instead of staying home and working to fetch water. This cause is killing two birds with one stone. [Not only are you helping yourself out by getting rid of the stuff you don't need anymore], you're also allowing the electronic waste to be recycled in a proper way so it is not damaging to the environment.?

Adds Aarzoo: ?And it's for a really great cause because it is going to water treatment facilities in Kenya. There is a lot happening here!?

If you have items to donate to the garage sale, they will be collected at the school through May 29. To give the club a heads-up a donation is imminent, email Tatyana Dachuck at tatyana.dachuck@ycdsb.ca. E-waste will be collected at Cardinal Carter Catholic High School on May 30 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The school is located at 210 Bloomington Road. Students will be on hand to do the heavy lifting.