The Spring Mill Community Takes Action

Service Learning has been a tradition at Spring Mill Elementary for several years. As a school engaging with the International Baccalaureate curriculum, we place high value on our the notion of ‘action’. We are proud of the efforts of our students, staff and families who have acted voluntarily and willingly to make a difference. In 2012, Spring Mill enters its 53rd year of serving the Washington Township community. In these pages we document our role within the community at large and the world, as we strive to make a difference, hand in hand...

Partnership with the Indiana Blood Center
Spring Mill participated in the Indianapolis Colts Blood Drive Challenge on August 29th and September 4th in 2009, and won it. The Blood Drive Kick-Off took place in the first week of school, and two students, Tatum Parker and Patrick Mason led it. They have benefited from blood donations and their comments drove our efforts. Their parents spoke at a PTO meeting about their experiences. Mr. Maniakas, our Music Teacher shared that he had donated over 5 gallons of blood over the years. PTO Treasurer, Joe Stilwell, played a huge role in scheduling donors for the two-day blood drive. Read more about Tatum’s leadership for action in this bulletin.

Since then, Spring Mill has held 3 blood drives each year and donated a total of 339 pints. Each pint helps save three lives and we are glad we’ve made a difference for over 1000 people. Our students ‘recruit’ parents, teachers, friends and family members - to sign up for the Blood Drive. What a joy it is to be able to contribute to our community in this manner!

View a video of the Blood Drive at http://sm.msdwt.k12.in.us/show.html

Pop Tabs for the Ronald McDonald House
Mrs. Hatcher’s and Miss Rowe partnered with their students to collect pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. The pop tabs are recycled and the money generated is used to ensure that the Ronald McDonald House remains open for families of sick or injured children being cared for at Riley Hospital.

For more information online, visit: http://rmhc.org/how-you-can-help/other-ways-to-get-involved/pop-tab-collections/

Be the change you wish to see in the world. --- Mahatma Gandhi
Supporting Schools on Wheels, Inc.
In 2009, Mrs. Lowe’s fifth grade class spent a month raising $576 for School on Wheels Inc., an organization that provides an education for homeless children in Indianapolis. Her class was able to get the school and community involved in the effort.
Agnes Stevens, The founder of School on Wheels Inc. has said, “It is the job of every child in America to go to school and learn. The same is true for the most forgotten children in our society, the homeless child. School on Wheels welcomes everyone to lay down differences and come together to bring hope to thousands of homeless students - from kindergarten to grade twelve - one by one. Hope is strong; hope is optimism; hope is self-reliant.”
With the funds they raised, Spring Mill’s fifth graders helped the organization in its efforts to provide one-on-one tutoring for homeless kids, a backpack, school supplies, uniforms, assistance enrolling in school, locating and filing school records and a toll-free number for around the clock School on Wheels’ support.

Linking up with Heifer International
Mrs. Andrews’ third graders joined Heifer International’s Read to Feed program in 2009. Students wrote letters to sponsors requesting a donation in exchange for reading. They promised to read a book for a $5 donation or read for one hour for a $1 donation. They wrote thank you notes to sponsors for their donations and selected animals to “buy” with the $265 that was collected. Way to go, Mrs Andrews’ class!
For more information go to: www.readtofeed.org

Partnering with the American Red Cross
When the earthquake devastated Haiti in 2010 and left thousands injured and homeless, the students at Spring Mill were determined to make a difference. Fifth grader, Lilly Harper, wrote a letter to the principal and then read it on our morning Bulldog Broadcast to urge her peers to do something to make a difference. Mrs. Behny’s 2nd grade class coordinated the efforts. They organized Hat Day, Crazy Hair Day, Do a Chore and Earn Money to Donate Day, Mismatched Day and Red and Blue Day for the Haitian colors. In 5 days the students raised over $3,700 to donate to the Red Cross for Relief Efforts in Haiti! Wow! Spring Mill Bulldogs, you rock!
Jump Rope for Heart
Mr. Campbell, P.E. Teacher at Spring Mill, has led several Jump Rope for Heart projects. Our students have learned about their own heart health while raising money to contribute to children with heart ailments. We thank everyone who has contributed so far!

\[ U + 1 \text{ jump rope} = \text{a BIG difference.} \]

Gleaner’s Food Bank
On Bulldog Broadcasts, Mrs. Balagopal, our principal, recognizes individual students and groups for their courteous behavior (such as opening the door for her or helping a friend at school), quality work (such as writing neatly and working hard), and positive contributions (such as giving up their recess time to recycle paper), by dropping a dollar in a jar for Gleaners Food Bank. Gleaners’ provides 6 meals to hungry people for just $1. Sometimes students bring loose change and dollar bills to add to the jar, and sign their names on the Jar Stars poster. We appreciate their kindness and generosity.

Supporting Senior Citizens
Miss Rowe’s first grades completed a writer's workshop unit on personal letter writing in February, 2009. They learned about reasons why people write letters, the form a personal letter takes, the importance of including a mixture of telling and asking sentences, and, most importantly, how receiving a letter MAKES SOMEONE’S DAY! The students decided they wanted to make someone’s day, so they each used what they learned in the unit to write a letter to a senior citizen residing at Marquette Manor. They learned to read and sing the words to the songs "Put a Little Love in Your Heart" and "You've Got a Friend in Me" as well.

On Friday, February 12, 2009 all of our first graders visited Marquette Manor, performed the songs, read their letters and visited with the residents. The visit brought a lot of happiness and joy to the residents and it also taught the children about the importance of ALL community members. Our kids were thrilled to have MADE SOMEONE’S DAY!
Composting
Mrs. Poindexter’s Kindergarten class has been composting in their classroom in a bin. Our school’s PTO has purchased a larger composting machine which is in our Outdoor Science Lab. Green initiatives are an important aspect of students learning as we focus on sustainability efforts through the International Baccalaureate initiatives.

Recycling
We thank all our community members who have dropped off materials for recycling over the years. Thanks for doing your part to take care of our beautiful earth!

Mrs. Mastain's second graders started a recycling project some years back, while completing a unit on recycling. The kids learned what could be recycled, how things are recycled, and what new products are made from recycled materials. They then created their own recycled items with partners. The following week students began recycling paper around the school. Once a week, her students volunteered to give up recess time to collect paper from across the school. Great job, kids!

Pumping up the PlayPumps Project
In 2010, Mrs. Mena's 3rd grade class helped to raise awareness and money to support the "PlayPumps" project. PlayPumps are engineered systems (made simple) to help bring clean drinking water to millions in Africa. Young students often don't make it to school each day because they have to walk for miles to get water from rivers, and carry it back in extremely heavy buckets on their heads. If they spill it, they must go back to get more. Even after the children obtain water for their families, it is often contaminated, causing illnesses that at times can be fatal. A "PlayPump" is a merry-go-round for children's schools. Kids can go to school, have a break, and while they are spinning on their new playground equipment, it is pumping water from safe sources deep underground to a nearby water tower. People from the area can get clean, healthy water easily and as often as they need, and children are still allowed to go to school and learn! Fun, learning, and health...all wrapped up in one! PlayPumps has now closed and gifted its inventory to Water for People. Read more at http://www.waterforpeople.org.
Spring Mill’s Community Closet

This incredible project has been a much-utilized part of the Spring Mill community. It showcases the talent, interest, caring, initiative and impressive largeness of our wonderful PTO.

For many years, the SMS PTO oversaw a Holiday Service Project Committee. This group of committed volunteers annually rounded up clothing, toy and gift card donations during November from SMS families, to be given to needy SMS families over Winter Break. In December, the group would meet to divide the amazing amount of donations and deliver them to SMS families before the end of December.

During the 2006-2007 year, it was noted that some SMS families had needs at times OTHER than the holidays. Whether a child received a medical diagnosis with prolonged treatment needs, the family suffered a home fire, or a family member simply fell on hard times, support was needed at differing times during the school year - not just during the holidays.

Before the 2007-2008 school year began, Stacy Lozer and Betsy Biederstedt met and brainstormed how SMS families could be better served throughout the year. Needs were discussed and plans made to round up donations.

- The SMS Counselor and staff became a conduit for determining needy families and what "other" needs may be necessary for SMS families/children.
- Students needed: book bags, school supplies (pencils, crayons, paper, erasers, calculators, etc.), personal hygiene items (including shampoo, deodorant, soap, hair care products, toothpaste, tooth brushes, etc.), hats, mittens, coats, gloves, alarm clocks, etc.
- Families needed 'Meals in a Bag'. With an increasing percentage of families in our school qualifying for lunch assistance, it was noted that some children arrived at school hungry. These Meals supply enough food for one family to have an entire meal.
- Grocery Gift cards and donations of games were collected each November, to be sent home to specific families in EACH and EVERY SMS Classroom in December - thus providing a meal and a toy for a family over winter break.
- Donations are accepted throughout the year and stored in the PTO closet on the Stage (which was thoroughly cleaned and organized by the PTO). PTO member(s) in charge of the Community Closet Committee ensure that timely newsletter articles, e-mail blasts, and/or flyers are sent home to the entire SMS community whenever items in the closet need to be replenished (i.e.: In the fall, a newsletter item was sent out asking families to purchase ON SALE school supplies and send those in... In the Winter, SMS families were asked via e-mail to send in mittens, hats, scarves and coats, etc.).
- All/any items in the Community Closet can be accessed by any SMS Staff member at any time of day. The staff member(s) send home any of these items discreetly with students. A sign-in/out sheet placed in the Community Closet allows the PTO Chairs to track items that need to be replenished and gauge the number of students/families at SMS helped during the year.

The project has continued since then in the able hands of other PTO Committee Chairs who have taken leadership to strengthen the community closet. We appreciate the support and action of our PTO in making this project an integral part of our school.
Tatum’s Bags of Fun!

A Spring Mill family shares information about a special project started by their daughter who was selected as a Riley Champion this year! Tatum also received the Principal’s Award for Service Learning at Spring Mill this year.

*Tatum’s Bags of Fun* is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that distributes backpacks filled with $300 worth of age-appropriate games, toys and activities to newly diagnosed pediatric cancer patients at Riley Hospital for Children and Peyton Manning Children’s Hospital at St. Vincent. *Tatum’s Bags of Fun* gave out the first Bag of Fun on August 1, 2008. To date we have distributed over 350 Bags of Fun to well-deserving pediatric cancer patients in Central Indiana. It is estimated that over 350 children are diagnosed annually with a form of cancer in Indiana.

Tatum is a 9-year old third grade student at Spring Mill Elementary School in Indianapolis, IN who has fought and beaten cancer twice in her young life. She was originally diagnosed with Ewing’s Sarcoma in her right femur on July 16, 2006. She endured a yearlong battle that included 13 rounds of chemotherapy and 3 major surgeries to remove the tumor at Riley Hospital for Children. She was cancer-free until November 2008 when she had a recurrence, this time in her right lung. She recently completed another yearlong battle that included 12 rounds of chemotherapy along with 25 radiation treatments. She has since returned to normalcy, attending school and being a 9-year old.

Our official title is The Gabby Krause Foundation dba Tatum’s Bags of Fun. *Tatum’s Bags of Fun* is a subsidiary organization of the Gabby Krause Foundation. Our Federal Tax ID is 47-0946567. You may contact Tammy Krause of the Gabby Krause Foundation if you require additional information:

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Be Strong…Stay Strong!!!

The Parkers

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P.S. From the Principal: In 2012, Tatum will be a middle-school student in MSDWT beginning in 2012. We are proud of her efforts and wish her the very best always!
We are so proud of our Spring Mill friends, who make a difference in big and small ways!

What will we accomplish next year? The possibilities are infinite!

Thank you Spring Mill School community for your generosity and big hearts.

You make a difference EVERY DAY!