

United Way Penny Parade Marches to Our Lady of the Rosary Elementary school

Sylvan Lake, Alberta – Tuesday March 8, 2011 – Today, students at Our Lady of the Rosary Elementary school in Sylvan Lake wrapped up their United Way Penny Parade at their “Count Our Blessings” event. Students were provided with red piggy banks and were encouraged to collect loose change. The banks helped to illustrate that even pennies can make a difference in the community and that every little bit helps. Students were elated when they saw all the piggy banks full of change, lined up tail to snout.

So far this year 241 students, ages four to seven, have participated in the event, with more classes expected to sign up in the fall. Gwen Clarke, Volunteer Education Chair with United Way who led the project was excited about the turnout. “It’s wonderful to see our youth initiative expanding to communities outside of Red Deer. The students and teachers who participated in the United Way Penny Parade over the last two years have enjoyed learning about the needs in their communities, and how they can help with those needs through education, volunteering and fundraising.”

Mayor Susan Samson, also a Cabinet member with United Way, attended the event and provided inspiring words to the students. “These youth are our future leaders, and we believe that it is imperative that we foster the importance of giving back to the community at an early age. Students that participate are able to experience the positive feelings that come with fundraising and volunteering. The Penny Parade is a great way to start them on a road of caring and sharing with their neighbours.”

The Penny Parade was first introduced in 2009 to foster volunteerism, leadership opportunities and to create awareness and action around human services in the community. Throughout the event, students learned that they could make a lasting impact, regardless of their age.

While the pennies are still being counted, it is expected that this initiative has raised approximately \$2,000. The funds raised for the Penny Parade will be added to the 2011 United Way community campaign.

Established in 1965, United Way of Central Alberta is a charitable organization working to improve lives and build community by engaging individuals and mobilizing collective action. More information on the initiatives and agencies supported by United Way can be found at www.caunitedway.ca.

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