

St Joseph's, Malvern Students Making a Difference

Published in Melbourne Catholic & Together at One Altar – 2011

Written by Fiona Bastille



When it comes to social justice and helping people in need, students at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Malvern are happy to answer the call.

During Lent, each class chose a charity or cause they wanted to help. They had guest speakers, raised money with cake stalls, fresh produce stalls and Easter raffles, and collected goods for the less fortunate.

Even the youngest in the school had an opportunity to make a difference. The two Prep classes collected clothes for Prep students attending the School of St Jude, which is in a small village just outside Arusha City, in Northern Tanzania. It was set up by Australian Gemma Sisia to educate the poorest children in the region.

Prep teacher Marta Lukaitis said: "There are so many people in this world that need the help of fortunate people like us. It's important for children to learn at a young age the importance of caring for others, no matter where they are."



Last year Marta introduced the importance of social justice and the plight of those less fortunate to her Year 1 class. Together they sponsored young Elifuraha so that she could attend the School of St Jude.

“The Year 1s raised enough money to cover Elifuraha’s school fees for 2010 and for this year too,” said Marta. “Each class also had a list of things needed by St Jude’s in their classroom and between us we gathered enough things to fill a 10 kilogram box. I took all the extra donations to St Jude’s along with a number of beautiful gifts and letters from my students for Elifuraha when I visited in January.”

Wanting to continue the good work with her 2011 Prep class, Marta said: “My preppies are very new to it all so we thought it would be a lot more meaningful for them to give something that belongs to them and that will keep another preppie in another country warm. They are very excited to see photos of the children with their clothes and to receive letters back from St Jude’s.

“There are many ways young children can make a real difference in the real world and they can do this such in a way that they understand who they are helping and why. We all want children to grow up feeling they can make a difference.”

Photo 1 (provided courtesy of Marta Lukaitis): St Joseph’s Primary School Prep Teacher Marta Lukaitis with sponsored child Elifuraha on the bus. Elifuraha is holding the St Joseph’s Grade 1 photo.

Photo 2 (by Gavin Blue) St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School prep students with collected clothes for donation.