

Students in Mrs. Duncan's fourth grade classroom have been busy with more than just reading, writing and arithmetic this school year. Students have been learning and preparing for various service trips in the community. Mrs. Duncan wanted to help her students see the needs in the community and what they could do, even as nine and ten year olds, to help meet those needs. She started praying this summer about how her fourth graders could see the importance of putting their faith into action, taking the lessons learned in Bible class and really starting to apply them.

For their first trip, students traveled to The Children's Home in Winston-Salem on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to help pull weeds from their garden and learn about how this organization helps our community. Before going, students learned about different kinds of weeds. Students also studied some information about the history of orphanages using the article "The Orphan Train." Students wrote reflections before and after going. Here are some of the comments made before going:

"I would like to learn more about weeds, and I love to help people." – Leeann Kluk

"I hope I will learn how the children live. I want to learn what they do and how they do it." – Kyndall Atkins

"I don't see very many weeds so I'm hoping to learn about weeds and mostly the Dalmatian Toad flax. I also hope to learn about how the Children's Home works." – Kamryn Hickman

On our trip, students got to see animals on the farm and pull weeds from the garden. Students also heard about the history and current work of The Children's Home. After going, students had these comments to share:

"We learned that helping people will be important when we are grown ups and it is important now. I feel stronger in the Lord my God, the one true God." – Chase Walker

"We can learn that a weed can look pretty, but it can kill a plant." – Dylan Stoltzfus

I feel happy that I got to help other children in need. – Jessica Hayes

"I feel like doing more for the Lord. We should collect some clothes and help them with the animals." – Rebecca Sheehan

"I feel great, because I got to help people that needed some help. I think what we can do next is go somewhere that there are a lot of cans and cups to pick up in the community." – Micah Adams

Mrs. Duncan was very pleased with the way her students behaved and responded to this experience. She hopes they will continue to see the needs and brainstorm creative ways to help. She hopes this experience will bring new meaning and application to their time spent studying God's Word.

During the month of October, fourth grade students lead a canned food for the whole Academy to help support the efforts of the WS Rescue Mission. Fourth graders went each day to count cans in each classroom. Students designed a pictograph, complete with labels and a key and displayed it in the cafeteria. The pictograph helped all students practice their math skills as they tried to see which half of the school was winning the school wide competition. K and 1<sup>st</sup> grades are competing against 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade to see who can donate the most items! K and 1<sup>st</sup> grades won with 548 items donated. 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade had 437 items. At the end of the month long competition, the Academy had almost 1,000 items to donate for a great cause!

Meanwhile, the fourth graders started talking about the homeless in our community and how the WS Rescue Mission is trying to meet the needs of those who so desperately need it. Students looked at Matthew 25:31-46, focusing on Jesus' call to meet the needs of "the least of these."

On November 18<sup>th</sup>, fourth graders personally delivered and sorted the cans the Academy has collected. Students will again journal about their experience, and then they will use excerpts from their journal and magazine clippings to create a collage of their learning.

For Mrs. Duncan it is so awesome to see all these plans come to fruition. She knows the Lord has been the reason for the success from the beginning – even giving her the idea to try these trips. Her students have been so responsive to the idea, and it is exciting to think about what all kids could do with the right support and freedom to dream big!