

Cardinal Carter students support India school



By Brock Weir

As some students are taking a short vow of silence next week in solidarity with and raise awareness of young people in developing countries who do not have a voice of their own, Cardinal Carter's Free the Children Club are not wasting any time shouting their latest initiative to assist a fledgling school in India from the rooftops.

To celebrate Earth Week, the students have put their heads together to develop an e-waste collection event at their school on Saturday, April 27. Working in conjunction with a local company specializing on the collection of old computers, printers, and other appliances, Cardinal Carter will raise ten cents for every pound of e-waste collected.

Proceeds from the event will go towards helping a school and the surrounding community they helped to build in Baarind, India. Last fall, students raised nearly \$11,000 to build the school and the relationship between the two communities endures, with the assistance of Free the Children.

The previous spring, 14 students travelled to the Indian community after winning tickets at We Day, the annual concert held by Free the Children each year in Toronto and they came back to Canada with the commitment to always keep this community in mind when raising funds.

'Free the Children has five pillars now, such as water, education, health care and employment,' says Amanda Boyce, one of the 14 students who travelled to India. 'We wanted to raise money and our first pillar was education. That was our main goal to get the school built because we helped raise the foundations of the school. When we came back, we started implementing our fundraising projects.'

One of the first projects out of the gate was a day of activities involving all students rolling up their sleeves for a day of fun and games. This event was very successful with a \$10 buy-in and this e-waste collection is the next step on the road.

'I know for me, that trip was the biggest eye-opener ever,' says Amanda. 'We worked really closely with all the kids in the village and played with them and just seeing their smiles and seeing their faces, the life they live, and how difficult it is and how little they have, it just inspired me personally. We brought back our stories and shared them with everyone who was inspired to join our club. People deserve to have so much more than they do and we're going to work hard to give it to them.'

'Other schools have done this in the past and they have been very successful in raising money for their school, so we figure it will be a good way not only to help our community in recycling their electronics in a safe way, but also help third world countries that

don't have the same opportunities we do," says Shannon MacMillan. "It is just a win-win situation for all of us.

Charity, of course, begins at home, and while it will be a couple of weeks before residents of Aurora and the surrounding area will be able to line up and donate that old computer gathering dust or that VCR that is now obsolete, students have looked to their own basements to get the ball rolling. What has come in so far is a colourful array of unusually heavy 20-year-old Apple computers, a VCR or two, and some other unlikely accessories.

"It essentially starts with our families and we first tell them what we're doing to look to see what we have at home, then we tell our friends, so it is a combination of word of mouth and also the flyers," says Maha Khawaja. "I think with this initiative, what is so great is that it is something anyone can do really and it is something that will help not only our community at school and Aurora, but eventually it will help the world. If everyone just pitches in that one computer monitor they wanted to get rid of, or that one cell phone they didn't know what to do with, it will help a lot in the long run."

Accepted e-waste includes cellphones, computers, monitors, printers, VCRs, and TVs. A full list of eligible items can be found at www.cch.ycdsb.ca. Collection runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on April 27 at Cardinal Carter, 210 Bloomington Road, just west of Yonge Street.

"It's a win-win situation? you clean up yourself and you are also helping someone else while doing it!?"