

# Woodland students embrace projects for CAP



By Brenda Blevins McCorkle / / The Daily News | Posted: Sunday, December 4, 2011 8:30 pm

WOODLAND — Savannah Guillen plans to be around next year, when the bulbs she helped plant at Woodland Intermediate School pop their colorful heads out of the dirt.

Savannah and her fellow fourth-graders at the school, as well Bobbi Sue Wilson's class at Northlake Elementary School in Longview, recently performed community service projects, including plantings, as part of a newly formed program called "Kids for CAP."

Retired Woodland teacher Jan Bohrsen created the program from an idea suggested by Lower Columbia Community Action Program (CAP) Foundation Board President Tim Welch.

The Woodland youngsters from classrooms of Lynnell Tsugawa, Pam Malik and Heather Cage wrapped up their learning experiences on Nov. 30 with a celebration in the Woodland Intermediate School library.

The children read essays they had written about their volunteer experiences. As a thank you for their efforts, each student received a coupon, donated by The Sweet Spot frozen yogurt shop in Longview.

The kids didn't know they were going to end up with a treat, teacher Cage said.

"We had a conversation about it the other day, about not getting rewarded but that it was an inside reward," she said. The program helped her teach the kids one of the school's "guidelines for success," which spell out the school's Eagle mascot: Effort, Accept responsibility, Give respect, Listen and Empathy.

By far, Cage said, the hardest to teach is empathy.

"You have to feel it and show it," she said. "The kids are really latching onto it."

As designed by Bohrsen, Kids for CAP also supports the state's essential learning requirements and social studies curriculum for fourth grade, including cultural diversity, economy and citizenship.

For a real-life example of those values, the CAP program showed the kids the need for services like the Help Warehouse, Meals on Wheels, "RUOK?" (for Are you OK?, a daily check-in by phone), and I-5 vans to Longview, Vancouver and Chehalis.

The students' designed their own floor plans for a food warehouse, learned about menus for home-delivered meals, and studied the CAP van locations and numbers of daily rides.

To boost CAP's Meals on Wheels program, they sold Kids for CAP bracelets for \$1 each, raising \$402.52, which was matched by Tim Welch and his wife, Lee Hutton-Welch of Woodland.

Like any good service agency, the kids kept track of service hours and activities.

Nansi Valenzuela, a student in Cage's class, said she helped plant tulips and clean the school grounds, but she also liked selling the bracelets. "It felt good in my heart to help people who are poor," the 9-year-old said.

Amelia Renner, 9, a student under Tsugawa's tutelage, took to the project easily, since she and her family already volunteer at the Woodland Community Center.

"We store meats in the freezer and dairy and store food down there," she said. "It makes me feel really good because I get to help people who don't have enough money to buy food," the girl said.

Bohrnsen called the students' response "astonishing." There was no promise of reward, no pizza parties and no competition involved, she noted.

"We didn't even tell them this (the celebration) was coming," she said.

"But they did it," Cage added. "Just for the good of it."

For more information and photos about Kids for CAP, visit [www.lowercolumbiacap.org](http://www.lowercolumbiacap.org) on the CAP Foundation page.