

Washington State  
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# Humanitarian Outreach Program

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## Washington State PTA

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The Washington State PTA is attempting to bring you "Programs to Go!" which will feature various successful PTA programs for you to pick up and use if you choose. These programs will come to you already organized, with minimal work on your part. Look for more "Programs to Go!" ideas in upcoming general mailings. If you have program suggestions, please call the Washington State PTA office at (253) 565-2153 or 1-800-562-3804 or email to [wapta@wastatepta.org](mailto:wapta@wastatepta.org).

**PROGRAMS TO GO!**

# A program that benefits all...



The Humanitarian Outreach Program involves PTAs and school children in collecting items needed by children in developing nations and shipping those items overseas to be distributed by local humanitarians. In this program PTAs purchase items, such as teddy bears, books in Spanish, crayons and other school supplies. Local children write letters, books, or collect toys they no longer play with, and include a picture of themselves on the items they made or collected to give to a needy child. Local humanitarians take pictures and videos of the children receiving their gifts and return home to give an assembly

## *On the cover...*

Children in an orphanage in Bolivia, receive ziplock bags of toys gathered by the children of Sunny Hills Elementary in Issaquah. The expressions of pure joy by these children were not missed by the children in Issaquah when Dr. Shinn returned to the states to show the children his photos and tell the stories of the journey at a school assembly.

to talk to the children about his or her experiences and show the children the pictures taken on these trips.

While this program provides for needy children around the world, it also provides local children the understanding that the true joy in life does not come from having material things, but instead, from contributing to a better world for all people. Children find true joy comes when they see the thrilled look of another child, who has next to nothing else, receive something they personally picked out or made with their own hands.

Additionally, this program provides an opportunity for local children to discover the power they have within themselves to make a difference around the world, and to realize that they have that ability now and always will have it. They become leaders and teachers as they show the world what they can do. Children learn they can choose to make the world a better place.

Cougar Ridge Elementary PTA, Washington State PTA's 2000-2001 Outstanding Local Unit of the Year, participated in this program. It was one of their most successful programs of the year. "Kids wrote notes in Spanish — even the first graders, with the help of teachers," said Nancy Campi, Cougar Ridge PTA 2000-2001 president. "It was a great program because it was hands-on, with the kids directly

involved. They could see it full circle and it comes to you in a package." In addition to the hand-written letters, Cougar Ridge collected bags of bilingual books, and Beanie Babies.

Issaquah PTSA Council, under the direction of their humanitarian chairperson, Kathleen Steoger, began this program two years ago with the help of a local dentist and humanitarian, Dr. Sherwin Shinn. This program has been enormously successful among PTAs in Issaquah. Following is how some of these PTAs participated in this program last year:

- The students at Skyline High School raised over \$1,700 in a penny drive, which was used to buy basic construction material to help build windows and doors in a village in Bolivia.
- The student leadership class at Beaver Lake Middle School organized a number of different donations from their school — including hats, scarves, gloves, shirts and sweatshirts, ziplock bags of Legos, ziplock bags of personal items (including such items and soap and toothpaste), art supplies, building blocks, and money.
- Discovery Elementary students donated T-shirts, socks, and school supplies. The year before they donated over 90 hand-made quilts for orphanages in Bolivia.
- Students at Sunny Hills Elementary donated new shorts as well as ziplock bags full of toys. The students at Sunny Hills Elementary were responsible for filling up their ziplock bags with toys from home that they no longer play with.
- Students at Arbor Elementary School donated teddy bears dressed in hand-made clothing (see photo on this page).

## Making a difference for families

In addition to donating items to orphans, this program also worked to keep families together. Money, as well as donated items, was collected by local children last year. One way this money was used was to help a newly widowed mother of six children. This mother was facing the real possibility of having to place her children in an orphanage because she had no way to support her family. After hearing this, Dr. Shinn and Kathleen Steoger and others purchased two llamas with the money donated by the PTAs participating in this program. With the wool produced by these two llamas the mother would have the means to keep her family together without placing them in an orphanage.

# Planning your program...

1. The State PTA office has several copies of a video produced by Issaquah PTSA Council on this program. Check out a copy of this video and show it at a general membership meeting or a board meeting at the beginning of the school year to stimulate interest in this program. Or if you know of a local humanitarian who travels to developing countries, invite him or her to talk at a PTA meeting and give a slide show at the beginning of the year to spark interest in this program.
2. After showing this video or presentation, invite interested parent (s) to volunteer to chair or co-chair this program for the year. Explain what is involved (as described below).
3. The program chairperson needs to identify and call a local humanitarian to work with on this program. Dr. Sherwin Shinn of Issaquah has volunteered to help your PTA if you do not know of a humanitarian in your community. If you would like to work with Dr. Shinn on your humanitarian program contact Kathleen Steoger, 206-669-1440 or kathleensteoger@hotmail.com.
4. Dr. Shinn or the local humanitarian you are working with will help you select a project for the kids and suggested items for your PTA to purchase to supplement the children's projects. Your humanitarian will also tell you what developing country your school will be collecting donations for.
5. Show the video to individual classrooms at your school or have an assembly and invite the humanitarian to talk to the children about the program. Kids get most excited when they see slides and hear stories of past projects.
6. Complete the project. PTAs purchase items suggested by the humanitarian. Children make or collect the items suggested for them and write letters attaching a picture of themselves to their letters.
7. Collate the purchased donations and hand-made items into individual bags — ziplock freezer bags, brown bags or some other small bags. Children could also decorate the bags as well.
8. Contact your local media or send out press releases to let your community know how your PTA is serving the needs of children. Also contact the State PTA office at (253) 565-2153.
9. Send these bags, along with some money to help pay for the shipping costs, to the humanitarian, who will hand deliver items to the developing country.
10. After the trip has taken place, it is imperative that the humanitarian representative follow-up with a presentation including pictures and stories about the trip and the responses of the recipients of the gifts. This allows our kids to see the difference they have made in the lives of people who often have nothing.

*Dr. Sherwin  
Shin and  
orphans from  
Bolivia*



## Teaching children about the joy of giving...

Echo Glen, a local juvenile detention center, also participated in this program last year. The children at Echo Glen made hats and scarves for children in Tibet.

The Echo Glen School children were really touched by the impact they made in the lives of other children.

In a survey administered at the end of the school year, about half the children at Echo Glen School said they want to grow up to be humanitarians.

## Goals of this program...

- Offer our kids at risk something that helps them see they have a lot to offer.
- Demonstrate how easy it is to bridge the gap between worlds.
- Give kids the opportunity to learn that we are more alike than different.
- Realize that we are part of a larger community.
- Understand that there is so much to be learned from each other.

## Teaching children how powerful they can be...

Children in Bolivia who were relocated because of an earthquake dreamed of having a playground at their school. When asked to draw a picture of what they wanted their school to look like, every single child drew playground equipment next to the school. Their dreams became a reality as a result of two young girls at an elementary school in Issaquah. These two girls — a second grader and a 6th grader — decided to take it upon themselves to raise the needed money for this playground to be built. They collected over \$150 in change and small

bills.

Kathleen Steoger took this money to their local Lowe's Hardware Store, and explained to an employee what she needed and how much money she had to spend. The Lowe's manager set her up with hardware she would need to build a large play structure (pictured right) and personally covered the extra expenses over what the two Issaquah children had raised to purchase such a large piece of playground equipment. Additionally, another employee at Lowe's personally donated the tools required to build the play structure. This play structure was built by vol-



unteers, using the donated tools and hardware, with wood purchased in Bolivia.

This program shows us all how powerful we can be. It brings out the best in all of us.

*Children in a village in Bolivia now have a playground.*

## Publicizing your program...

*A child gathering firewood is one of 20,000 left homeless due to flooding.*



One of the reasons this program has really taken off in Issaquah is that the people involved in this program are enthusiastic about it. If your PTA decides to participate in this program, tell everyone you know about it.

Send press releases or call the Washington State PTA office and have them send press releases to your local media.

Spreading the news about your program will not only inspire other PTAs, it will make your students and your PTA proud

about the program they have worked so hard on.

It will also help to find other humanitarians in your local community who might be interested in working with you on future projects.



*A mother and her child.*

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