



Photos

Sophia, Kristina, Josie, all live in Naperville. These incredible kids were honored by their elementary school for their community service in having a HEAR US lemonade stand.

Other children in the neighborhood joined in to ride their bikes and tell people, bring items for sale to people in the parks and courier the payment back to the stand, or just used their own piggybank change to buy a gummy fruit snack or a can of soda, etc.

Refreshing Story: *My Own Four Walls* Inspires Major Fundraiser!

Story/photos by Janyce Hamilton

(NAPERVILLE, IL MARCH 2007) After watching your amazing documentary Monday night, the next morning Sophia explained to Janet over breakfast that the movie was good but kind of sad. We agreed. That's when we began to brainstorm for what we can do to feel less sad. On warm days Sophia occasionally has a stand anyway because she loves to make and sell stuff (sort of like playing store). Usually she only makes \$5 or \$6 after 3 hours. But we decided that this time if we did a stand, and if the money goes to Diane Nilan to help homeless kids through HEAR US, that would make us feel *great*.

It did.

Yesterday in Naperville it was 73 F and sunny and the entire neighborhood got into it—little ones and adults.

Kids on bikes riding by got so excited to see what the fundraiser was for, they rode home and got their piggy bank pennies and came back. The African-American families and their kids, who usually keep to themselves, separate from the white families in my neighborhood, came over and bought stuff and thus interacted with the white girls running the stand. Asian neighbors came over. Polish and Lithuanian too. Kids on bikes who didn't have any change back home offered to instead find people to buy the stuff, and actually rode to neighboring parks and schools and got them to visit the stand. In some cases, the people gave our bicycle runners their quarters, and they came and got the juice box or soda, and brought it back to the remote customers. The girls offered the bike delivery boys 1 free item, and they wouldn't accept it! They didn't want to consume the products that were used to raise money for homeless kids, even though they were thirsty from riding their bikes everywhere for the cause.

Meg and her daughter Julia, who had attended "My Own Four Walls" at her church, St. Thomas the Apostle, the night before, came over and made a sizable donation and hung out too.

A transistor radio played music for the young volunteers, who occasionally would go inside and grab instruments to bang on, strum, or rattle to get more attention of those who kept shuttered inside their homes or had car windows rolled up. At one point, the Bears' pom-poms came out too and a little boy was cheering with them.

When it was over, the girls made you \$56.10 in 2 hours.

It really is a lot of money for the three 7-year-old friends, who made up homeless kids' songs and dances to entertain their customers.

I realize you are in New York as you read this, but have a happy day knowing how good it felt for these girls to be part of the solution.

The result is a lifelong lesson: "I can do something and it won't be that hard, in fact, with friends by my side, it's actually fun."