Dream a Little Dream

In considering dreams and dreamers, the Grade Two class found it fitting to explore child dreamers – who they are, what their dreams are, and how they are being accomplished. We began with reading a book and watching a video about Malala Yousafzai, the brave girl from Pakistan who almost lost her life fighting for equal education for girls, and the right to education for all children.

Working in pairs, students read and completed research about a child dreamer of interest. Once their research was complete, students practiced their letter-writing skills to write a letter from the perspective of their dreamer to inspire future dreamers. This exercise had students collaborating to establish voice in their writing, while incorporating all that they have learned about parts of speech, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Dreamer: _____

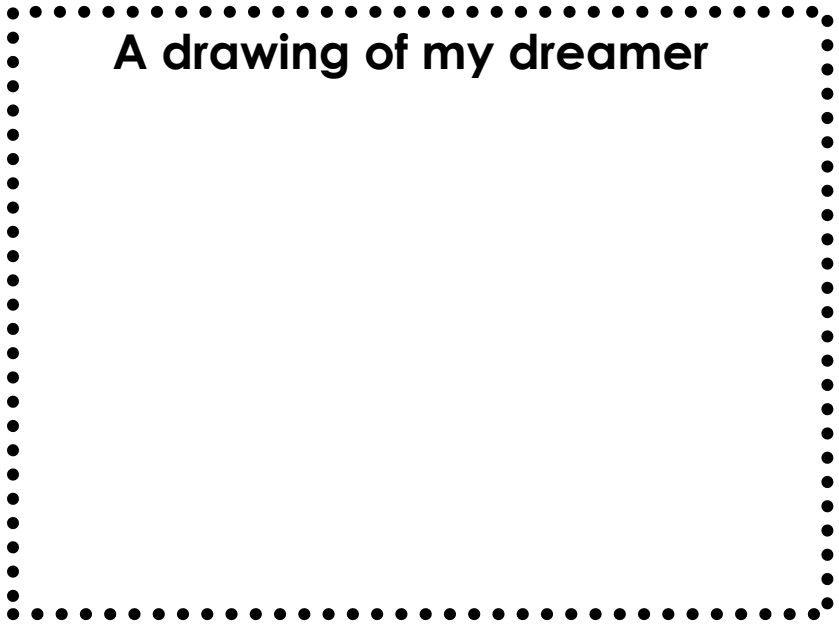
My dreamer is from:

_____

_____

_____

A drawing of my dreamer



My dreamer's dream

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How my dreamer is accomplishing his/her dream

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Lily Born (11 years old)

A few years ago, Lily came up with an invention to help her grandfather who has Parkinson's Disease and was frequently spilling his drinks.

Using moldable plastic and a bit of experimentation, she made him a plastic cup that didn't tip and was comfortable. About a year later, she noticed her dad trying to save his laptop from spilled coffee, and she made him a ceramic version at a local pottery studio.

After using it for a short time, and realizing what a great invention it was, Lily's dad asked her if she wanted to bring it into production. That began an adventure that had them up to elbows in clay and traveling across the world to the ceramics capital of China, JingDeZhen. There they were able to refine the models, find a manufacturer and prepare for a production run of ceramic cups.

Thanks to supporters on Kickstarter and Indiegogo, the ceramic Kangaroo Cup became a reality. Lily continues to be a role model for kids everywhere and an inspiration to makers of all ages.

Lily and her Dad have partnered up with a team of designers and marketers to introduce a new plastic version of the Kangaroo Cup. In addition to the main benefits of the ceramic cup, it's made of a more durable material, has comfortable grips and come in sets of colors.

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Ryan Hreljac (6 years old)

Ryan Hreljac was 6 years old when a talk by his grade one teacher, Mrs. Prest, changed his life. She told the class about people in Africa who had a very hard time getting clean water and access to wells. Without this basic human necessity, people, especially children, can get sick and sometimes die. Deeply moved, Ryan persuaded his parents to pay him to do extra chores and finally came up with the $70 he thought was needed to drill a well. But he was in for a shock. WaterCan (a non-profit organization that provides clean water to poor countries) told him that it would actually cost $2,000 to drill a well on another continent. Ryan didn't give up. He got very busy doing more chores and expanding his fundraising. Several months later he had finally collected the $2,000 and the rest, "as they say", is history.

He sent the money to WaterCan and in January, 1999, The Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CPAR) drilled a well beside Angolo Primary School in northern Uganda, with funds raised by Ryan and many others.

Since that first well was dug in Uganda in 1999, RyansWell.ca has, with the support of organizations such as WaterCan, CPAR, CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency), and Free The Children, raised over $800,000 to provide clean water to people in Africa. According to his mother Susan, many others have helped along the way, including his school, Holy Cross, Millenium Kids, UNICEF, Rotary, The World Health Organization, World of Children and Living Water International.

His Ryan's Well Foundation has supported water and sanitation projects that have been completed or are under way in Uganda, Malawi, Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania.

Katie's Krops (10 years old)

The idea for Katie's Krops began with a 9 year old girl and a 40 pound cabbage. In 2008 Katie brought home a tiny cabbage seedling home from school as part of the Bonnie Plants 3rd Grade Cabbage Program. She tended to her cabbage and cared for it until it grew to an amazing 40 pounds. Knowing her cabbage was special she donated to a soup kitchen where it helped to feed over 275 people. Moved by the experience of seeing how many people could benefit from the donation of fresh produce to soup kitchens, Katie decided to start vegetable gardens and donate the harvest to help feed people in need.

Katie now has numerous gardens and has donated thousands of pounds of fresh produce to organizations that help people in need. The mission of Katie's Krops is to empower youth to start and maintain vegetable gardens of all sizes and donate the harvest to help feed people in need, as well as to assist and inspire others to do the same. The problem of hunger is real, Katie's Krops mission is simple, we all can help because...

It only takes a seedling!

Ken (9 years old)

Happy Animals Club was started in 2014 by then 9-year-old Ken thanks to help from people all over the world who donated money to help him rescue dogs. Here's Ken's story.

I love animals. I have one rescue dog and two rescue cats. Ever since I can remember I wanted to open an animal shelter to help the stray dogs and cats on the streets.
But in February of 2014 pictures of me feeding dogs on the street were passed around on the Internet. Some very kind people who saw these pictures donated money to help me care for the dogs. We got enough money to get the dogs I was feeding off the street, feed them high quality canned food, and provide them with veterinary care. They gained a LOT of weight, their open wounds healed, and their fur grew back. They also learned not to be scared of humans. In addition, I got enough money to start an animal shelter.

We also spent a lot of money on wood, electrical wiring, tin roofing, cement, and many other things. The area flooded every time it rained, so we built canals. The shelter now has 2 large pens, 2 apartments, and an annex. The dogs are not kept in cages unless they are ill or there is some other good reason. The cats have a very big living area solely for them. All of the dogs and cats at Happy Animals Club are very happy animals!

Our big challenge now is to make a system for finding the dogs good homes once they are healthy again. This is a problem because in the Philippines most people want pure breed dogs. They don't like mutts, even though mutts are just as smart, just as loyal, and just as loving.

Amanda's Lemonade Stand (2 years old)

Hi, I am Amanda and I am 17 years old. Ever since I was 2 years old I've had a lemonade stand on the front lawn to raise money for pediatric cardiac research initially through the Heart and Stroke Foundation and now through Save a Child's Heart and SickKids Hospital in Toronto. So far I have raised over $200,000 to fix kid's hearts that are broken.

But two hundred thousand is just a number, and numbers have to come from somewhere. That seemingly big number started with one. One is the first glass of lemonade I ever sold. One is the first dollar I ever donated to charity and one is YOU, the amount of people it takes to change the world.

Amanda Belzowski knows that "you're never too little to do something big."

Sunday marked the 14th year that the 14-year-old Toronto girl opened up her lemonade stand to raise money to help "fix kids with hearts that aren't working."

"It's our responsibility as global citizens to give back to the community and make a difference in the world," said Amanda. "Together we can all change the world."

Her entrepreneurial spirit has been passed down to her 6-year-old brother Josh, who was the stand's CEO for the second consecutive year.

"We have to fix a child's heart if it is broken," said Josh. "I'm going to do the lemonade stand for my entire life. I'm even going to pass it on to my kids."

Amanda started the lemonade fundraiser when she was two. Riding on the back of a bicycle with her parents Dan and Lisa in the Becel Ride for Heart, she saw a lemonade stand and wanted to open one.

Na'ama Uzan (5 years old)

A Toronto girl's lemonade-stand fundraiser to help find a cure for her brother's neurological disability has inspired a U.S. family dealing with the same illness.

Na'ama Uzan, 5, has raised approximately $25,000 to support a cure for Angelman Syndrome, a rare development and neurological disability.

The girl's older brother, Nadav Uzan, suffers from Angelman Syndrome. The disability makes it difficult for the seven-year-old to walk or speak, and he has frequent seizures.

Na'Ama Uzan has raised thousands of dollars for the Foundation for Angelman Syndrome Therapeutics.

"He can't talk so he gets frustrated easily," Na'ama told CTV Toronto.

Last spring, Na'ama Uzan opened up a lemonade stand to raise money for the Foundation for Angelman Syndrome Therapeutics. Her stand, which also sells muffins, has raised the impressive sum in a short time.

"It's going to make a cure," Uzan said. "I'm doing it because I want to support a cure for Angelman Syndrome."

Uzan's efforts have inspired others to also raise money to find a cure for the disability. Thousands of kilometres away in California, David Low and his partner have raised more than $20,000 after their son was diagnosed with Angelman Syndrome six months ago.

"The technology and therapies will be there to help these individuals and the only way that hope is going to be fulfilled is through the efforts like people like Na'ama and her family who inspire others to give," Low told CTV Toronto.

Zach Bonner (8 years old)

Zachary Bonner was born in Searcy, Arkansas on November 17, 1997, but now calls Tampa, Florida his home. Zach started doing community service in 2004 after Hurricane Charley hit Florida. In 2005 he formed the Little Red Wagon Foundation, a non profit organization designed to help underprivileged kids with a focus on homeless youth. Zach believes we all have the ability to make a change in this world if we just try.

8-year-old Zach Bonner lives in Tampa with his realtor mom Laurie and teenage sister Kelley. In 2004, in the wake of Hurricane Charley, Zach uses his beat-up toy wagon to collect water, food and clothing for families left homeless by the storm. Emboldened by his success and the attention he is receiving from the local media, Zach battles hurdles to start his own charity, the Little Red Wagon Foundation, to produce and distribute "Zach Packs", backpacks filled with life's bare essentials, plus a toy.

Dylan Mahalingham (9 years old)

For starters, Dylan's official name is Krishna Mahalingam, but most people just call him Dylan. Dylan is now 16 years old.

Dylan was born in New Hampshire, United States of America, and he also resides here with his parents, and his older sister, Ammu, who is with him when she is not in college, and his beautiful chocolate Labrador Nestlé.

Dylan Mahalingam is an extraordinary young philanthropist, child welfare and environmental activist, and social entrepreneur that is most famous for founding Lil' MDGs, a non-governmental organization that seeks to encourage children from all over the world in supporting the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by utilizing the power of the Internet through digital and social media.

What's so amazing about this organization is, since its inception way back Dylan was only nine years old, the foundation has grown so large that it now has over 24,000 regular youth volunteers who actively participate in furthering the goals of Lil' MDGs.

Through his foundation Lil' MDGs, Dylan was able to reach out to thousands of children from over forty one countries all over the world and encourage them to actively engage in helping societies worldwide through giving financial aid to relief operations, and raising money for the construction of several establishments that are key to a community's growth. In fact, through Lil' MDGs, Dylan was able to raise over 780,000 dollars to provide relief for tsunami victims, and has raised over 10 million dollars for hurricane victims all across the world.

Dylan also goes around the world, speaking in various conferences and charitable events, constantly encouraging and empowering children to do their part in changing not just their society, but the world. He says often during interviews:

> *"I would have to say that the main message is to use our success with Lil' MDGs as a source of inspiration to learn that they too can make a difference in a global way. I want them to realize that they are never too young to make change."*

Yash Gupta (14 years old)

It wasn't until Yash Gupta broke his glasses in taekwondo practice that he realized just how much he relied on them. His prescription was so high that he had to wait a week to get a new pair.

For Gupta, then a high school freshman, those seven days were a blur. Literally.

Gupta's eyes were also opened to a much larger problem. He saw on the Internet that more than 12 million children worldwide don't have the corrective eyewear they need.

"It's just a total disadvantage for them, because (if) you can't see anything ... you definitely can't make the most of the education you're being given," he said. "It would be impossible for them to fully achieve their potential.

"I had this problem for one week, but these kids have these problems for their whole lives."

So at just 14, Gupta started Sight Learning, an organization that collects used eyeglasses from optometrists and donates them to organizations that can deliver them to children in need.

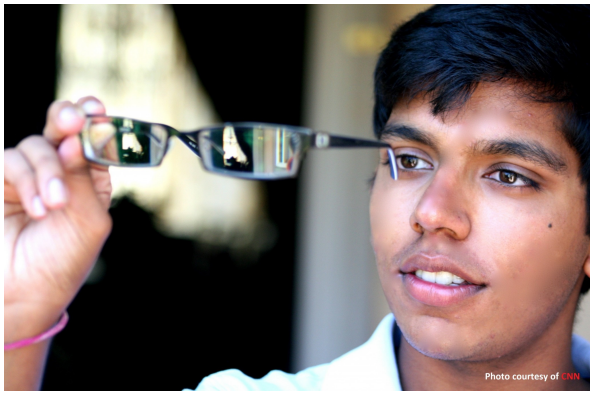
Since 2011, Gupta has donated 9,500 pairs of glasses, worth nearly $500,000, to young people in Haiti, Honduras, India and Mexico.

With help from his father, Gupta set up his organization and approached local optometrists, who agreed to put out drop boxes where patients could donate their used eyeglasses after getting a new pair.

In the past three years, Gupta has gone on numerous trips to India and Mexico, where he not only provides glasses but also assists the doctors and volunteers at eye clinics.

"Right now, we're partnered with organizations that do international work. But in the future, I'd like to bring this service to inner cities in the U.S.," he said.

"Kids are passionate and can make a difference. It's just a matter of finding out what you care about and focusing on that."



Blair Brettschneider (24 years old)

GirlForward provides adolescent refugee girls with individual mentorship, educational programs and leadership opportunities, creating a community of support that serves as a resource and empowers girls to be strong, confident, and independent.

In conflict, adolescent girls are especially vulnerable to violence, isolation, and being kept out of school. When they are resettled, they need extra support.

WHY REFUGEES?

There are 60 million people worldwide who have been forced to flee their homes. We are in the midst of the biggest refugee crisis the world has ever seen.

EDUCATING GIRLS

Most GirlForward girls have had less than two years of schooling before arriving in the U.S.

OUR MODEL

Our girl-centered programs provide girls with friends, mentors, and safe spaces.

Working as an assistant at a refugee resettlement agency, Blair Brettschneider was well aware of the challenges that refugees face upon arrival in the U.S.

But in 2010 she got a first-hand view into the educational struggles of refugee girls when she took on a tutoring assignment, helping 18-year old Domi from Tanzania.

Programming is offered year-round, including a free summer camp with a curriculum of journal writing, reading and weekly field trips around the city.

Brettschneider, 25, has earned several accolades for her work, including being named a CNN Hero in 2013. But she says her biggest reward is watching the organization grow beyond her initial idea.

“We have a program director, we have interns, and some of the new girls don’t even know who I am and that’s the best feeling because it means they identify with the organization and it’s not just me.”

Riley Hebbard (7 years old)

Hi, I am Riley Hebbard. On February 20, 2009 I saw the TODAY Show and Ann Curry was in Africa. Mom said she was at the border of Chad and Sudan, at a Darfur refugee camp. That's where families are staying until it becomes safe at their old house. Ann was with lots of kids and I noticed that their school had no toys or furniture.

So I decided to gather all my toys that I don't play with and send them to Africa. Then I asked my friends at school and at home to get their toys together too. Would you please help us collect a lot of toys so we can help even more kids in Africa?

Nicholas Lowinger (12 years old)

I was inspired to start *Gotta Have Sole Foundation* because at a very young age I saw children in homeless shelters in Rhode Island who didn't have shoes or had shoes that were used and falling apart. Some had to share footwear with a family member and missed school because it wasn't their turn to wear the shoes that day, and others had sores on their feet from wearing shoes that didn't fit them properly. I was devastated by this and wanted to help the children however I could. I started donating my gently used clothing and footwear but often didn't have the correct sizes for the children. I knew that the only shoes that would fit them best would be new, correctly sized ones and hoped someday I would be able to donate these.

I continue this endeavor and have donated new footwear to over 45,000 children in homeless shelters in 43 states throughout the United States. My goal is to reach as many children living in homeless shelters in the US as I can.

It has always been my hope that the children will feel more confident about themselves because they have new shoes to call their own and that they will have the same opportunities afforded to them as their peers.

Lilah Petersiel (started when she was just 1 year old)

Lilah's Fund was started by Lilah Petersiel's family while she was still in treatment for neuroblastoma 10 years ago. Diagnosed and treated within her first few weeks of life, Lilah fought her disease with courage, strength, and a smile and is now a bubbly, inquisitive, and, most importantly, healthy 6th grader in Toronto. Lilah shares our dreams of solving neuroblastoma so that all children who face this disease can do so with the knowledge that they, too, will get healthy soon.

Lilah's Fund is a registered family fund at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. In just 6 years, the fund has directed over $750,000 to research aimed at developing more effective and less harmful treatments for neuroblastoma patients. These funds have assisted SickKids researchers in obtaining an additional $3,000,000 in research grants to support their drug discovery program under the leadership of Dr. David Kaplan.

Lilah's Fund works in collaboration with a number of other Ontario family- run organizations, including the James Fund, Shania's Sunflowers, Sam's Day, Kyle's Fight, Sydney and Georgia HOPE fund and Barbara's Butterflies in order to fund a critical mass of neuroblastoma research at SickKids and collaborative research projects around the world. We are also a member of the newly formed Neuroblastoma Consortium collaborating on research and outreach efforts around the world.