



Mission of Love



"You are not here to save the world, but are here to touch the hands that are within your reach."

Glenwood students helping Lakota students

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Last Friday, the Glenwood Middle School fifth-grade students from Judy Welshs and Jennifer Draveckys classes got a special surprise visit from the Mission of Love. The classes had a project going to raise school supplies for the indigenous children in South Dakota.

The project got its start two weeks ago when fifth-grader Natalie Wilson was studying various Indian cultures with the rest of her class. She learned about the Native Americans on the Pine Ridge Reservation where the nations highest unemployment rate is centered and many are barely making it day to day. She had also found out about Mission of Love building the first-ever reservation school that would teach the native children about their culture and language. It was when Natalie heard about the need for school supplies that she said, we have to help them.

Wilson approached her teacher and in a short time, two classes began bringing in supplies to give to the school. What Wilson and her classmates didn't expect was the visitor that came to the school on Friday. Mission of Love founder and director Kathleen Price showed up to talk to the students about the school and the Boardman Glenwood donation.

In a full room of students that was so quiet one could here a pin drop, Price was given the floor. She told the students that the school in Pine Ridge is called the Sacred Hoop School. Sacred Hoop means, the blue sky that is above all of us, Price told the students. She explained how the school originally began. She said in the late 1880s a delegation of Lakota Native Americans made a trip to Washington to ask for assistance in building a school on the reservation. Shortly after the trip came the massacre at Wounded Knee where men, women and children were killed.

The Wounded Knee incident was something the classes had read about in their course of study involving native peoples.

Price went on to tell the students about a fellow on the reservation named Leonard Little Finger, who was a descendant of the original delegation that went to Washington to ask for the school.

Now, 117 years later, Mission of Love helped Leonard Little Finger make his grandfather, Chief Big Foot, dream a reality, Price said.

Mission of Love went to South Dakota last year and built the school. The building was then furnished with desks and cabinets donated from the former Austintown Middle School on Mahoning Avenue. Little Finger will be serving as the schools first principal as it nears the opening date this fall.

One problem that Price wanted to solve before the school opens is to make sure the children have supplies. She was asked how the Mission of Love got started and that was the very subject that came up.

Price said while visiting South America, she came upon some children who were in the process of learning. They were using sticks to write in dirt.

They had no pencils or paper, she said. At that point I saw my calling, I had to do something.

From that point, Price formed the Mission of Love, which has made more than 50 airlifts around the world to help children and the indigenous peoples everywhere.

At Pine Ridge, Mission of Love has built many homes and has helped a lot of families, many who did not have a homes of their own. And many who couldn't afford one, or couldn't afford to by their children school supplies.



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Price said this donation would definitely have a big impact on the school and its first group of students. She told the two Glenwood classes that the donation would be going to South Dakota on Monday, but she didn't want to wait until then for a word of thanks.

With both classes jammed into one room, Price placed a call to Little Finger, then turned the phone over to Welsh. Little Finger said how grateful he was and wanted to thank all the children.

Price told the two classes that she would get pictures from the reservation school and share them when she got back, before school was out. She then turned to Wilson and presented her with the gift of a Lakota necklace and a special angel lapel pin as Price told her she was an angel messenger for the Lakota children.

As several students helped carry the collected supplies out to the Mission of Love vehicle, Welsh thanked Price for her visit.

This has been the best day we've had this school year, Mrs. Welsh said. It was really special.