

# Kids Reach Out

Across the U.S., kids are finding ways to help



**ON THE JOB** Mimi Ausland lends a hand at her local animal shelter.

Not too long ago, Mimi Ausland, of Bend, Oregon, realized that there is no limit to how helpful kids can be.

Mimi, 12, has **volunteered** at a local animal shelter since she was 9 years old. She walks dogs, plays with cats, and cleans the animals' cages. Last year, she took her pet project to another level. With the help of her parents, she started the Web sites [www.freekibble.com](http://www.freekibble.com) and [www.freekibblekat.com](http://www.freekibblekat.com). Both Web sites help collect food for dogs and cats in shelters.

How does that work? Every day, a new trivia question is posted on each of the sites. For every person who answers the question, right or wrong, 10

pieces of dry food are donated to an animal shelter. Businesses such as pet stores **sponsor** the Web sites. They donate the pet food or help pay for it. Mimi got her idea from a similar Web site that donates rice to hungry people worldwide.

Since last April, the two free kibble Web sites have provided more than 600,000 meals to homeless animals. The food is currently donated to 11 shelters around the U.S.

"I want to try to feed animals in as many shelters as possible," Mimi said. "Helping all of the shelters would be amazing. There are a lot of them out there."

## Generation Serve

Mimi is one of thousands of kids nationwide who are using their time and

creativity to help others. More than one third of kids perform community service through school. Others find their own ways to serve. A recent survey showed that 9 out of every 10 kids ages 6 to 14 believe it is important to give back to their communities (*see Kids Care*). From feeding shelter animals to helping U.S. troops, kids everywhere are discovering they have the power to make a difference.

## Helping Soldiers

This school year, Olivia DeFoggia of Gibsonia, Pennsylvania, has been learning what it

**HELPING HANDS** Students at Eden Hall Upper Elementary collect items for troops in Iraq.



## \*\*\* KIDS CARE \*\*\*

Kids nationwide are finding ways to show that they care about others and the world around them. A 2008 survey asked 2,000 kids, ages 6–14, how they have been involved in service activities. Here's how they responded:

- 71%** Donated food, toys, or clothes to people who need them
- 64%** Recycled
- 44%** Raised money for an issue or cause they care about
- 39%** Donated money to something they care about
- 38%** Volunteered or helped out in other ways
- 35%** Watched a TV show about an issue or cause they care about
- 32%** Talked to friends, family, or teachers about an issue they care about

SOURCE: JUST KID INC., WINTER 2008



**64% RECYCLED**

means to help others. She joined the Fourth-Grade Outreach Team at her school, Eden Hall Upper Elementary. The group offers students the chance to participate in community-service projects.



**ON A MISSION** Jonathan Freeman stuffs backpacks with supplies to give to needy children.

"I like helping the less fortunate, and it makes me feel good inside," Olivia, 10, said.

Members of the Fourth-Grade Outreach Team recently showed their support to U.S. soldiers in Iraq. They set up collection boxes at their school to fill with items to send the troops. Many of the students also went to their neighbors, friends, and family to gather donations. The students collected items such as toothpaste and shampoo. The Outreach Team's hard work helped fill about 15 garbage bags with supplies.

Students at Richland Elementary, a nearby school, got in the spirit of service too. Through a coin collection they called Silver

for Soldiers, the school raised more than \$1,700. The money was used to cover shipping costs for Eden Hall's care packages.

## Kids Helping Kids

Kids are also helping each other. Jonathan Freeman, 14, of Tampa, Florida, started a project when he was 13 called Kits for Kids. The project gives backpacks filled with school supplies to children whose families are in need of such donations.

Jonathan spent a year collecting money to purchase the backpacks and supplies, like notebooks and pens. He collected more than \$3,000. Last summer, the money helped Jona-

than give away more than 400 backpacks. But his work's not done. Jonathan says he plans to continue Kits for Kids. He wants to give away backpacks each new school year.

"It's been a life-changing experience to me," Jonathan said. "Just seeing the look on the family's faces . . . it's just been really [rewarding]."

—Natalie Smith

## BACK TO YOU

**Do you want to volunteer? Here are some ideas!**

- \* **As a class, find an organization that helps others. You can raise money for it by having a bake sale or collecting change.**
- \* **Collect canned goods, coats, blankets, and toys to donate to a local homeless shelter.**
- \* **Make cards for local police officers, firefighters, or soldiers.**

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