

Twelve-year-old boy begins Bushels of Love Foundation

by Doug Rich

While politicians are busy telling us everything they plan to do if elected, a 12-year-old boy in rural Douglas County, Kan., is actually doing something.

Caleb Powelson founded the Bushels of Love Foundation last year and started collecting donations with this harvest. He is collecting donations to help children in Kansas this year, but he has big plans for the Bushels of Love Foundation.

Last winter Caleb came home from church one Sunday with a flier about a boy in Africa whose parents had died and he was living with his grandmother, who was very ill. Caleb wanted to raise money to sponsor this boy.

"It did not surprise me because his faith is really out there, for a little boy," Melissa Powelson said.

Melissa told her son it might take him a long time to raise enough money to help this boy and it might take even longer to get that money to him. Kids have a short attention span and Melissa thought Caleb would move on to another topic, but that didn't happen.

Caleb's father, Royce Powelson, and his grandfather are farmers and Caleb wondered why they could not give some of their grain to help feed children in need. Together he and his mother came up with the idea for the Bushels of Love Foundation.

The idea was for farmers to donate a bushel of grain during harvest and the money from that grain would be donated to help children in need. Originally, Caleb concentrated on helping that boy in Africa but he has changed his plans to helping children here in Kansas.

The idea lay dormant until harvest began this fall, and the grain and the calls began pouring in from across the state.

Melissa Powelson said the process is simple. If a farmer wants to donate grain, he needs to contact his elevator and have them set up an account under the name Bushels of Love Foundation. It is just like a farmer's account. Donated grain is credited to this account. Powelson said elevators could cut a check to the Foundation on a monthly basis or hold the grain until harvest is over, charge them a storage fee and then send a check to the Foundation.

Caleb and his mother have contacted over 250 grain elevators in Kansas.

The response has been overwhelming. In just one day, they had over 300 e-mails from people wanting to be part of this effort.

Their official mailing address is Bushels of Love Foundation, P.O. Box 635, Wellsville, KS 66092. Their new web address is www.bushelsoflove.com. There were so many hits on their first website that it crashed and they had to design a new one. The e-mail address is bushelsoflovefoundation@yahoo.com.

Caleb is carrying on a family tradition, of sorts. His great-grandmother, Maxine Johnson, founded Farm Incorporated in 1963--the largest group home in the state of Kansas. She loved to help kids and so does Caleb. Caleb has big plans for his Bushels of Love Foundation. This year, he is concentrating his efforts on Kansas, but he would like to expand it next year. The donations will remain in this country and go exclusively to help abused children, homeless children, children with medical needs or children with educational needs.

"If all the farmers could donate a bushel of grain, we could change the world," Caleb said.



BUSHEL OF LOVE--Caleb Powelson, a 12-year old boy from Baldwin City, Kan., came up with the idea for the Bushels of Love Foundation last winter. He began collecting donations this year to help children in need in Kansas. (Journal photo by Doug Rich.)

Politicians could learn a lot from this young man.

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