

Rainbows make a difference!

Fri, 22 Jun 2012 - 3:03 PM CST

The Full Gospel Church (AG) Rainbows class (ages 3 to 5) raised more than \$800 in just nine months to raise money for Coins for Kids and help build kitchen centers for children in Africa. Although a few children are missing from the photo, sponsor/leader Joann Rullo says the class typically has 14 children attending.



For Full Gospel Church (Island Park, New York) Rainbows Sponsor Joann Rullo, the past year has been one of her most surprising in her dozen years of leading and teaching children. In just 9 months, her class of 14 to 17 children raised more than \$800 for missions and the Coins for Kids/BGMC project.

Although raising hundreds of dollars may seem respectable, but nothing to shout about, the perspective changes once one understands that the children Rullo and her co-sponsor, Debbie Flannery, teach are girls and boys ages 3 to 5. In fact, some of these children are not that far beyond the diaper stage!

Rainbows, an Assemblies of God Girls Ministries midweek or Sunday evening program for pre-kindergarten girls and boys, focuses on helping children learn simple biblical truths - such as Jesus' love for them - and how to be like Jesus all in a fun, loving and safe environment.

Rullo says that this past year, the Coins for Kids project was providing kitchen centers for boys and girls in Africa. "I explained to the children that the

children in Africa we wanted to help didn't have kitchens like we have in our homes, or refrigerators or stoves like we do," she says.

After showing the children the Coins for Kids video and pictures of the kitchen centers missionaries were going to build for the children, Rullo and Flannery, along with their helper, Maria Crowley, helped the kids decorate plastic buckets with pictures of refrigerators, stoves and other kitchen items.

"I told the children to take their buckets home and every time someone visited the house, just ask them if they would give the change in their pocket or purse towards our missions project," Rullo explains. "Then every week, the kids would bring their buckets and empty them into a large container - which was a lot of fun for the kids."

Every week, Rullo would roll the coins and take them to the bank, which soon began looking for her missions deposits. "The year before, we gave \$300 to Coins for Kids, which I thought was a lot," Rullo says. "This time, I would count the money and look at our total giving and think, 'that can't be right . . . ,' it was as if God was multiplying the money!"

Lilly Conforti, the Children's Ministries coordinator and Girls Ministries director at Full Gospel, was quick to notice the building excitement. "Each week, the Rainbows girls and boys would run into their classroom, decorated buckets in hand, and pour out their offerings - they were so inspired by the lack of basics needs in the African children," she recalls. "Joann, Debbie and Maria challenged and taught these little ones how important it is to respond to the Holy Spirit in giving."

Rullo is also quick to give credit to her Rainbows' parents for encouraging their children in raising money for missions. "This was really a family affair," she says. "The kids and parents were excited about the project and as our total grew, it seemed so did the excitement." In all, they raised a total of \$813.61 for the Coins for Kids/BGMC project in South Africa.

"When I first received the email about these Rainbows girls' and boys' efforts for the Coins for Kids missions project, it brought tears to my eyes," says Candy Tolbert, National Girls Ministries director. "This is where we begin building hearts of compassion in children who will one day be the missions-minded men and women leading our churches and their ministries."

At 60 years of age, Rullo says she has contemplated stepping down as a Rainbows sponsor a few times, admitting with a laugh that it's getting a little harder to bend down. But each year, as new smiling faces are added to her Rainbows club room, she just can't say no. "I see their faces and I just love the kids so much," Rullo says, "I tell people that I want children to see Rainbows as a fun place to learn about Jesus."

"Children love receiving from others," adds Conforti. "But when the Holy Spirit turns that receiving heart into a giving heart, children can change the world."