



### *St. Paul, Minnesota*

# **BIRTHDAY BAGS** *A Service Learning Project*

HOSA members in the Health Occupations class at Hubert. H. Humphrey Job Corps Center with Sandie Tyler, WICS (Women, Infants and Children Services) Representative, created and filled 50 Birthday Bags each October and April. Their instructors are Mary Taylor and Colleen Zepeda, and the chapter is located in St. Paul, Minnesota.

These special Birthday Bags have been distributed to local food shelves and community centers around the Twin Cities which have been selected by the students. The purpose is to make sure children are able to celebrate their birthdays even when their family may be experiencing a difficult time economically.

A Birthday Bag is a decorated large grocery bag filled with items one would use to celebrate a child's birthday. The students first decorate the paper bags with cartoon characters, designs of their own creation, glitter, ribbons, markers and crayons. The students make bags for various age groups, including little ones and teens. The students also make some of the bags with a birthday greeting in a different language. Then, the students start a campaign to collect funds for items needed to fill the bags. We fill each Birthday Bag with frosting, an aluminum baking

pan, candles, napkins, plates, a new toy, a birthday card, stickers, and balloons. The list could go on.

In recent campaigns, we have partnered with T.L.C. Toys, a non-profit organization who makes and donates beautiful handmade wooden toys for less fortunate children. We were able to include one of these toys in each of the 50 Birthday Bags! The birthday cards donated have been actually created by the students in the Medical Office Support class at Job Corps.

Health Occupations students have also raised funds by collecting donations from staff and students at the Job Center, including donations from SGA, the Student Government Association, and by selling jewelry that was contributed for this purpose, and by selling flower corsages for a school dance. The Health Occupations students have provided manicures for fellow students just before prom time for a voluntary contribution several times.

We have created and contributed approximately 500 Birthday Bags to nonprofit agencies over the past 5 years!!! Our wish is that 500 children enjoyed happier birthdays!

### *Billy Ryan High School, Denton, TX*

The Billy Ryan HOSA Chapter 5517 has been busy introducing its new officers who will serve until February 2009. This great group of officers has a lot of ideas for fundraising and reaching out to the community. We just recently had a HOSA Garage Sale where students donated items and we worked together to sell refreshments and tried to educate people about what HOSA is. We feel we made progress in reaching out to the community and helped with fundraising for State Competition.

Another excellent idea formed by our advisors and officers is to sell ceiling tiles that students can paint and sign. We believe it to be a great way to build a family, not only amongst our HOSA students, but a fun way to bring in HSTE students.

Our largest and most complicated project is still being discussed but we will be planning an Autism Speaks walk that will hopefully raise money for a great cause. We will be dedicating a lot of time to this undertaking, and making sure we execute it to the best of our ability. While projects are in the works we have been dutifully hosting meetings, and having mixers. These mixers are a great way to bring a chapter closer together.

We are helping members of our community through community service, even having members who serve upwards of 40 hours a month. Billy Ryan High School is looking forward to a great year and lots of opportunities to reach out.