

GOOD CITIZENSHIP

The Ultimate Birthday Present: Giving To Others

(NAPSA)—Several years ago, a little girl named Ellie Guettler—then 4—decided she wanted a cow for her birthday. Her parents patiently explained that their small Atlanta backyard wasn't really the place for a cow.

Little Ellie, however, was not to be deterred. Especially not when she heard about a charity that could provide a cow to a poor family in another part of the world—an important gift that would help that family become self-reliant. So Ellie set out to raise \$500: The theme of her birthday party was Cows and Roses. Each friend brought money (mostly loose change) and a rose for the birthday girl. And the birthday cake was decorated to look like—you guessed it—a cow.

Since then, Ellie, now 8, has raised more than \$5,000 for Heifer International, the organization that strives to help families around the world through a variety of programs, including the “Most Important Gift Catalog in the World.” The gifts in this catalog don't come wrapped in paper and ribbon. Instead, they eat grass, lay eggs and provide such resources as milk and wool, so that people can have a better life.

Ellie is just one of many children who have worked to raise funds and help others through Heifer International. John David Cobb of Knoxville, Tenn., used his sixth birthday party to benefit “kids without toys.” Guests were asked to make donations instead of bringing gifts to the Robin Hood-themed party. By the end of the celebration, John D's “band” had collected \$600. These funds went to purchase a llama, two goats, two flocks of chickens, two bunches of ducks, a gaggle of geese, a trio of rabbits and a



Children like Andrew Tirro, above, are using their birthday parties as fundraisers to help end hunger through Heifer International.

“Hope Basket” filled with chickens and rabbits.

One convenient program that helps children like Ellie and John D is Heifer's online gift registry. By signing up, individuals can let friends and relatives know about their desire to help others, requesting gifts from the organization's catalog.

Another Knoxville resident, Andy Tirro, also threw a fundraising party to buy a family a cow. Once the guests—who ranged in age from 4 to 12—understood where the money was going, they were happy to pitch in to help buy “Andy's cow,” with all the good it might do in the world.

“I wanted to feel good about what I'd done with my birthday,” said Andy, “and I think a Heifer International birthday party is a great idea for other kids. They can feel good about what they're doing for others, and they don't really need more piles of toys to put away.”

To learn more about Heifer International, its online Giving Registry and other programs, visit www.heifer.org.