Encouraging leadership

Leadership is an important quality to cultivate and this quality is often learnt first at school. Children learn by example what it is to be a leader when they observe the teachers, governing staff and learner representatives at their schools. Schools often create opportunities for learners to develop and hone their leadership skills by electing prefects and by allowing learners to form and head up school committees or clubs.

Collect-a-Can has encouraged leadership in schools through its Schools Competition which requires schools to collect cans in exchange for cash and prizes. Although all schools are paid cash for the cans that they collect, prizes are awarded on a monthly and annual basis to the schools that collect the most cans overall and this is where the challenge lies.

The process of encouraging and motivating learners to keep on collecting cans as well as the logistics of handling, storing and dispatching the cans to Collect-a-Can needs to be well managed in order to give the school a competitive edge. Gaining the support of parents and getting local restaurants, taverns or stadiums to donate used cans, can also make a significant difference to the school’s success in the competition. Over the years, Collect-a-Can has seen some great examples of leadership amongst school staff and learners as they work together to collect cans; and their efforts have often paid off handsomely.

In 2011 Riba Primary School from Limpopo Province was the winning school in Category One* of Collect-a-Can’s National Schools Competition and won R66 000 for collecting 948 896 cans during the course of the competition. Their success can be attributed to the leadership and dedication shown by the teachers and learners.

“Having a teacher or learner body that is actively involved is critical to the success of such a project,” says Zimasa Velaphi, Public Relations and Marketing Manager for Collect-a-Can. “The learners are instrumental in collecting cans for their school and their enthusiasm for the project will have a lot to do with the leadership and mentorship they receive over the course of the Schools Competition.”

Collect-a-Can would like to encourage schools to get involved with the Schools Competition as it is not only a wonderful opportunity to raise funds whilst cultivating environmental awareness, but it also creates a forum to develop leadership skills in the school.

To find out more about Collect-a-Can and its Schools Competition visit Collect-a-Can’s website www.collectacan.co.za or contact the Collect-a-Can head office on 011 466 2839. Collect-a-Can is also on Facebook, Twitter.

* The Schools Competition awards prizes in two categories, Category 1 for schools with more than 500 learners and Category 2 for schools with 500 or less learners. This gives smaller schools the opportunity to still be competitive despite their size.

“Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another.” Nelson Mandela