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Balloon Witnessing

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Ruth Murdoch Elementary School

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Balloon Witnessing

Students and faculty at Ruth Murdoch Elementary School in Berrien Springs, Michigan, prepared for the annual Andrews Homecoming Parade. Students would carry blue and white RMES balloons as they did each year to show their school spirit. As school staff blew up these 50 balloons to use in the parade, they never suspected one would soon be on an amazing journey.

As always happens when children carry balloons, one of the balloons “escaped” and took off into the gray sky. Students cheered and waved and laughed. Eventually, the balloon disappeared out of sight—and no one gave it another thought.

Our students marched through the entire parade, letting their balloons fly high, tossing candy to spectators and having a great time. Our group even won an award at the end of the event. As far as we knew, the parade was a total success!

Weeks later, a letter came in the mail addressed to the students at Ruth Murdoch Elementary School. It said, “I thought you’d be interested to know that today when I was out walking in the woods near my home, I found a balloon that you had set aloft. ... I had never heard of your school, so I Googled it and was surprised to find that you live in Michigan and your balloon had traveled all this way!

“Amherst, Massachusetts, is in the very western part of the



Audrey Walker used the example of the lost balloon to teach her students about American and world geography.

state at the foot of the Berkshire Mountains. ... I just thought you’d like to know about where your little balloon landed. I hope your teachers show you on a map.”

The letter was signed “Eileen Wood.” The deflated blue balloon, with the string still attached, was also enclosed in the envelope.

Jesus told His disciples, “and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the earth” (Acts 1:8 NET). Isn’t God awesome? One special student acted as a witness to someone who lives more than 800 miles away without knowing, without trying, but by simply being a part of our school. Christ will use all of us in His own special way, and we are thrilled to know that our students are part of His plan.

Wendy Keough is the principal’s assistant at Ruth Murdoch Elementary School in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

A Village of Hope

As soon as my spot on the mission trip to Tanzania, Africa, was finalized, I knew one thing: I wanted to take my students at Berrien Springs Village Adventist Elementary along for the journey. Determined they would participate and benefit from the experience as much as possible from the classroom, I began making plans for them to raise money to help pay for construction of “House of Hope,” the orphanage the mission team would help construct.

Fellow teachers soon caught the vision and jumped on board to help organize fundraisers. Students in grades pre-K to grade eight were challenged to raise \$20 each at an assembly where

they saw and heard about the plight of more than 400 orphans in the nearby villages, who these buildings would house.

Seventh and eighth graders gathered sponsors for what they