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École acadienne de Pomquet Grade 10 students Sarah MacNeil (left) and Katherine Pettipas recently presented gifts to the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre as part of the school's le petit papa de Noël initiative. The school community contributes to a fund during the year that is distributed to local groups and organizations. AWRC women's support worker Isabel Gillis accepted the gifts. (Submitted photo)

Schools' casual days benefit charities

by Corey LeBlanc

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Twenty-five cents can still go a long way. Just ask students at École acadienne de Pomquet.

The school's student government recently donated a variety of toys, games and other Christmas items, along with a monetary contribution, to the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre (AWRC) as part of its own version of casual Fridays.

"It is something that students and staff have been doing for the last couple of years," Grade 10 student Sarah MacNeil said.

Each Friday, students pay one quarter for permission to don a cap or hat, while teachers and staff members who wear jeans toss one dollar in the collection.

"It's a fun way for everyone to contribute to the community," Grade 10 student Katherine Pettipas said.

"It is surprising how quickly it adds up," Sarah added.

Prior to Christmas, the casual day collection is used to make the holidays a little brighter for local families. Along with the AWRC – this year's recipient – the Pomquet school community has "adopted a family" and made contributions to Christmas Daddies.

"It means a lot to all of us, and we hope it helps some families in our communities," Katherine said.

Before turning over their piece of Christmas cheer to the AWRC, the items were displayed in the school.

"Everyone had a chance to see what their money was able to buy," Sarah said.

The student leaders said the monies remaining as the school year winds down are usually donated to the IWK Health Centre.

"It is a simple, easy way for us to give something back," Sarah said.