



## 8-year-olds forgo birthday presents to help Haiti

*Reprinted courtesy of the Woburn Advocate*

A group of celebrity singers, rappers and actors may have gotten together to produce "We Are the World for Haiti" earlier this month, but they've got nothing on a group of youngsters from Woburn.

They've orchestrated what might be called "We Are the Hurd for Haiti."

It all started with three second-graders from Hurd Elementary School – Anthony Colombo, Sean Keenan and Zac Willis – who happen to have birthdays close to one another's.

Often, the three have had a joint celebration to mark their births but this year, following the devastating earthquake in Haiti, they decided to do something else to commemorate turning 8. On Friday, they took over the Burlington Ice Palace rink for a skating party that drew more than 60 of their friends – who brought donations to help Haiti instead of presents. They netted \$1,276 to help the recovering country, and the Ice Palace donated ice time.



"We did it because we have enough gifts and they don't have anything," explained Anthony, whose actual birthday is March 19. "I think we should give them something."

"I'm glad we're doing it because in Haiti, a lot of people died and there are a lot of people without moms and dads," agreed Sean, who turned 8 on Feb. 9.

"When the earthquake hit Haiti, people were hurt," added Zac, whose birthday is Feb. 26. "Instead of getting presents from everybody, we're asking them to donate to Haiti."

Many of those who attended the party were fellow Hurd School students and others were from Anthony and Sean's hockey teams, the Mites Travel 1 Team and the Mites Travel 3 Team respectively. Sean boasted that everyone on his team, except one person who was out of town, RSVPed to his invitation.

The boys' parents – Anna and Mike Colombo, Jennifer and Jay Keenan and Melissa and Fred Willis -- kicked in to provide pizza for the get-together so that all of the proceeds could go to help Haiti.

Melissa Willis selected Cure International as the charity that will receive the donations, because a coworker's father is active in the group and it maintains a Web site, [www.cureinternational.org](http://www.cureinternational.org), that includes pictures and other information showing what the organization is doing to help children in developing countries.

"I just found it to be an amazing organization and we wanted the children to be able to see where the money was going," she explained. "You're always concerned that your kids need to learn to give back at an early age and to see what they have and what others don't have."

And the first song played as the skaters hit the ice for their party?

"We Are the World for Haiti," of course.

If you want to help, organizers of the skating party are still accepting donations to help Haiti. Those who want to contribute may drop off a check, made out to Cure International, at the Hurd School, 75 Bedford St., Woburn, MA 01801 or contribute online at [www.cureinternational.org](http://www.cureinternational.org).