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## Piano prodigy performs charitable acts

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**By:** Dominik Kurek

**November 17, 2008 09:59 AM** - Although he's only 7, William Franklyn Leathers has embraced the adage that it's better to give than to receive.

In just two years, the Mississauga boy has raised over \$2,000 to buy goods from World Vision Canada's gift catalogue which were sent to developing nations to support children, their families and their communities.

Recently, through the Mississauga-based agency, he sponsored a Sri Lankan child his own age.

"I'm giving money to World Vision to help families all over the world because they don't have enough to eat and enough clothes," he says of his charitable work.

At the age of 4, William and his mother Donna Leathers were watching television when a World Vision ad came on showing hungry people.

"It made me sad," he said of the commercial. William asked his mom if they could send yogurt to poor people overseas. It was explained to him that yogurt would not make the trip.

So, on his fifth birthday, William asked his friends and classmates from Fern Hill School in Oakville to bring money to contribute to World Vision instead of gifts. The funds topped \$500 that year, more than \$600 on his sixth birthday and another \$1,090 on his seventh birthday. He expects to raise even more on his next birthday coming up in January.

When he turned 7, William began receiving an allowance. With the money he decided to sponsor a girl - Nishanthini Sathasivam - through World Vision. Through sheer happenstance, Nishanthini shares William's birthday down to the time of day.

Because his allowance isn't enough to support a child, he raises money doing occasional concerts for seniors by playing piano and singing. William has been playing the piano for over three years. He has a condition called synesthesia, which in his case, allows him to see sound. His mother describes it as a kind of sixth sense.

Aside from playing piano at an early age, he was also reading and writing before the age of two.

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*Staff photo by Daniel Ho*  
 William Leathers holds a picture of Nishanthini Sathasivam, a girl from Sri Lanka who shares the same birthday, including the year, as Leathers. The young Leathers sponsors Sathasivam through charity concerts and donating his allowance.

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