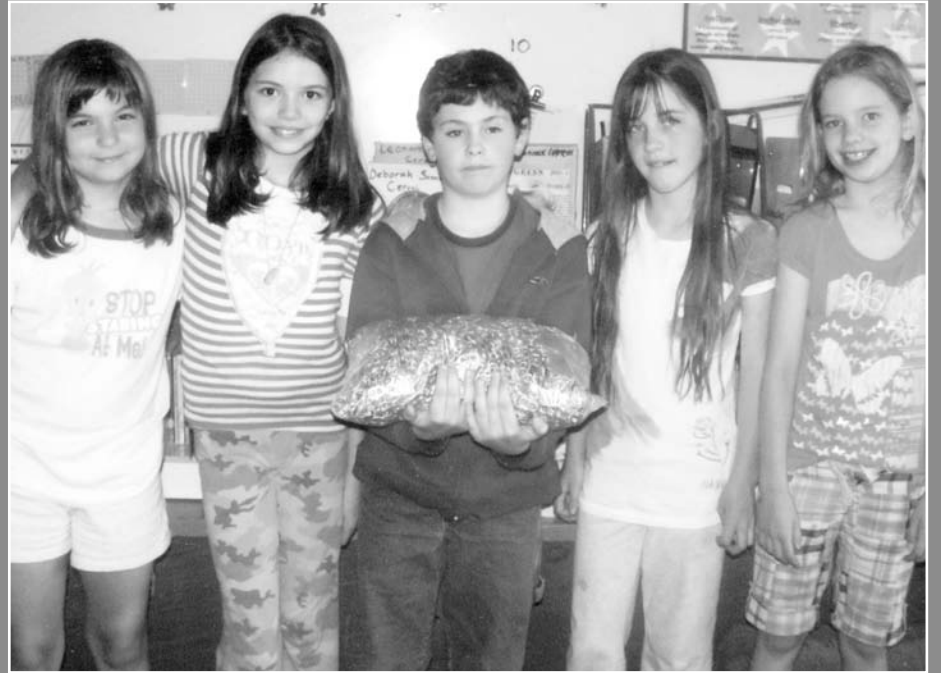




THE CLOWN UNIT PERFORMS at the Northeast Shrine Association Field Days. Clockwise from top left: **Jack "WC Fields"** performing in the One Man Skit; **Ray "Matey" King** gets a Shaving Cream Pie from **Paul "Lefty" Johnson**; **Dave "Do-No" Newcomb**, **Ed "Pea-Pa" Dowling**, **Gordon "Bondo" Lauzon**, **Jack "WC Fields"**, and **Paul "Lefty" Johnson** performing their skit; and **Ed "Pea-Pa" Dowling** and **Gordon "Bondo" Lauzon** performing Airplane Skit.

Counting by Pull-Tabs



THE class voted and pull-tabs won! Mrs. Girouard's third grade class at the Swallow Union School in Dunstable, MA, chose this as their class collection. They incorporated it into their math curriculum as they collected tabs and counted them by ones, tens, hundreds, and then thousands. The task was to collect them until they had a thousand, then they heard about the Dunstable/Tyngsboro Lions Club collecting and donating them to the Aleppo Shriners Children's Transportation Fund. The class wanted to donate their collection to them, but first they wanted to reach 10,000 pull-tabs. When they reached that amount they were motivated to collect even more, so they didn't stop until the last day of school when they reached 18,500. It was a great and gratifying learning experience for the students.

Straight Talk about Spine Health

Shriners Hospitals Promotes National Bone and Joint Awareness Week 2008

WHILE it is common knowledge that back problems plague many American adults, it is equally important to be aware of the spinal health of children.

During National Bone and Joint Awareness Week, Oct. 12-20, Shriners Hospitals for Children is sharing some "Straight Talk about Spine Health" and providing tips to help avoid typical problems.

Common causes for back pain and problems in children include having a sedentary lifestyle; carrying heavy, ill-fitting backpacks; developing poor posture habits; and participating in certain sports. It is important to address these issues because, without preventive attention, the problems they can create may follow children into adulthood, potentially leading to a lifetime of discomfort.

Advice and Awareness

Most school-age children use backpacks. Understanding how they should fit and that the weight of the bag should be proportionate to the weight of the user is very important to avoid back problems. Generally speaking, backpacks should not weigh more than 15 percent of the user's bodyweight and be no wider than the user's chest. When worn, they should sit no higher than the base of the neck and no lower than 2 to 4 inches below the waist. Backpacks should have adjustable, padded straps, including a waist strap; have several compartments; and be made of lightweight material.

These days, children spend nearly as much time as adults looking at computer monitors and television screens, and playing video games. Children should have a properly fitting chair, be taught good posture habits, and not remain seated in the same position for extended periods of time without moving.

In addition to raising awareness of these common problems, Shriners Hospitals is encouraging parents and pediatricians to be aware of the importance of scoliosis screenings. Scoliosis is a lateral – or side-to-side – curve of the spine greater than 10 degrees, which makes the spine look more like an "S" or a "C" than a straight line when viewed on an X-ray. Early diagnosis allows the ability to monitor the condition over a longer period of time, which can be important to ensuring proper treatment.

Beginning when children are around age 8, parents are encouraged to watch for signs of possible scoliosis, including uneven shoulders when the child is sitting or standing up straight, prominent shoulder blade(s), or a tendency to lean to one side. Scoliosis screenings, provided in many school systems, are a recommended component of pediatric health care, just like vision and hearing screenings.

Shriners Hospitals can Help

The 19 Shriners Hospitals for Children specializing in orthopaedics can provide expert information and resources on these and the many other pediatric orthopaedic conditions that affect the spine.

U.S. Bone and Joint Decade, which continues through 2011, is a concerted worldwide effort to increase understanding and treatment of musculoskeletal disorders and injuries through prevention, education and research. Leaders of Shriners International and Shriners Hospitals' public relations staff are working in their communities and with local media to promote the awareness campaign. To receive materials supporting this effort, contact the public relations department at Shriners International Headquarters at (813) 281-8162 or shrinepr@shrinenet.org. www.shrinershospitals.org



SURGICAL TREATMENT for scoliosis helped **Heidi** return to an active life. Less than six months after the surgery, she was one of only two college freshmen to be selected to her varsity dance squad.



Shriners Hospitals
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