

2012-13 school year

Herrick orchestra concert raises funds for Oklahoma tornado victims

Twenty members of the orchestra from Herrick Middle School played outside of the Jewel in Downers Grove the afternoon of June 1, raising \$637.85 to donate to the American Red Cross to benefit victims of the Oklahoma tornado! It was a blustery day, so the students improvised and used clothespins to keep their music from blowing into the street. They played their final piece, "Skyfall," just as it began to rain.

O'Neill car wash raises funds

The O'Neill Middle School student council hosted a car wash May 18 at District 58's Administrative Service Center, which raised \$459 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma society of Illinois!

Kingsley all-school walk benefits JDRF

Kingsley School recently hosted an all-school walk to benefit the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. Each class walked a certain number of laps around the building based on their grade level, with sixth graders completing six full laps -- a total of 2.2 miles. The event ended up raising approximately \$1,900!



Belle Aire sixth-grader chosen for Avon Walk Youth Crew

Belle Aire sixth grade student Madalyn Quitter will get the experience of a lifetime June 1-2, when she will be one of just 16 children to serve on the Youth Crew for the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer. Madalyn was inspired to participate by a close friend of the family, whom they call Auntie Donna. She was diagnosed with breast cancer that has since metastasized to her brain.

Madalyn was chosen for the Youth Crew based on an essay she submitted about how breast cancer has impacted her life, how much she loves encouraging and uplifting others, and what she hopes to gain from participating.

"Seeing my aunt fight breast cancer has made this disease more real for me now, and I want to help find a cure for it by supporting the people who walk," Madalyn wrote. "I love to help and cheer people on. I always tell my friends at school to never give up, along with my friends at figure skating, and now I want to cheer on more people. ... No matter when, where and what is going on, you will always see me smiling. Enthusiasm is my middle name!"

Madalyn's duties will include arriving a day prior to the walk to help set up the Wellness Village; serving breakfast, lunch, dinner and water to the walkers; and motivating them as they complete their journey. She will also have the opportunity to make connections with new people and hear their stories about why they are walking, Kim said. Other members of the family are supporting Auntie Donna, as well. Madalyn's brother Lucas Beechler, a first grade student at Belle Aire, raised nearly \$400 and subsequently shaved his head in March for breast cancer awareness, and Auntie Donna made the first swipe. Kim Quitter also is participating in the Avon Walk in support of their friend.

Anyone interested in donating to support Madalyn's fundraising commitment to the Avon Walk can visit her page at <http://tinyurl.com/b8mq5bc>.

O'Neill raises funds for genocide awareness

O'Neill eighth graders recently did their part to raise awareness of past and present genocides during their annual fundraising campaign, "Got Awareness." Over the past four years, O'Neill students have raised more than \$13,500.

bd's Mongolian Grill at the Bolingbrook Promenade donated \$3 for every person who came in May 9, and said they were there for the guest grillers--O'Neill staff. On May 16, Home Run Inn Pizza at 75th Street and Lemont Road donated 20 percent of the bill for every dine-in or carryout customer who turned in the event flyer.



The students also sold wristbands and gift basket raffle tickets during all lunch periods the week of May 6 to raise awareness about genocides throughout the world and raise funds for the various charities. This year's fundraisers will benefit the Solar Cooker Project, which provides solar cookers to women in refugee camps; and the Sudanese Community Center, which assists Sudanese living in the Chicago area area to acclimate to America by helping them find day care, adult education, job training, transportation, and English as a Second Language courses.

Fairmount all-school packing event at Feed My Starving Children a huge success

The Fairmount student council's packing event at Feed My Starving Children was a huge success. Thanks to the generosity of the Fairmount School community and staff, the students raised \$2,000 to donate to the organization.

"These funds, along with the outstanding participation of Fairmount families and staff at the food packing event, enabled us to provide one year's worth of meals for 63 children in dire need," said Fairmount Principal Tony Coglianese. "This project gave us an opportunity to learn more about the world and that there are people in need of assistance in meeting their daily basic needs of food clothing and shelter. The students and adults that were able to work at the packing event realized the 'good feeling' of doing work that benefits others much less fortunate than themselves."

[Visit our Presentations and Videos page to view a video preview of the event, created by the student council!](#)

Henry Puffer student council to host walk/run for Gigi's Playhouse

The Henry Puffer Student Council hosted a walk/run fundraiser after school May 17 to benefit Gigi's Playhouse.

Gigi's Playhouses are Down syndrome awareness and educational centers that provide resources, specialized teaching, and support to individuals with Down syndrome, their families and the community.

"This event was held to show support for students and families within the Puffer community," said student council co-sponsor Katie Hurckes.

Preschool through second grade students made one lap around the school property (a little less than one mile), third through sixth grade students made two laps, and those older than sixth grade made three laps.

Herrick SNAC students complete service projects

Students in Herrick Middle School's Social Networking and Communications (SNAC) course recently completed a variety of service projects around the school as the culminating activity to the quarter. SNAC teacher Kathy Mahay asks teachers in advance what projects they might need assistance with, and students spend several class periods helping out as needed. Projects this year included making ice packs in the nurse's office, creating a citizenship bulletin board, leading guided reading groups, and organizing the LRC. "We're trying to give them the whole service mindset," Mahay said. "They really do a fantastic job."



Cub Scouts clean up flowerbed at Whittier

Cub Scout Pack 85, with some help from two scouts from Troop 9 and parents and siblings, spent part of their day on Sunday, April 14, cleaning up the flower bed on the primary side of Whittier School. The scouts did a great job!



Belle Aire hosting raffle for Read to Feed

The Belle Aire School student council will host a Family Fun raffle during Earth Week, in celebration of family fun without television. Raffle prizes will include activities to do without screens, and proceeds will go to Read to Feed, a reading incentive program through Heifer International. According to the website, "Read to Feed is a reading incentive service-learning program that offers global education opportunities and will foster in children a love for reading, a passion to help others and a motivation to help create a better world."

Fairmount families set to pack meals at Feed My Starving Children

Fairmount School families will head over to Feed My Starving Children's Aurora facility on May 6 to pack meals for those less fortunate. The school also hosted a raffle for a Kindle Fire, raising more than \$1,000 for the organization!

Hillcrest's Green Team collecting used shoes for those in need

In honor of Earth Week April 22-26, Hillcrest's Green Team will host its first annual shoe drive. The Green Team is asking families to donate used adult and children gym shoes, which will be given to organizations that provide shoes to adults and children who cannot afford to purchase new gym shoes. The shoes that cannot be reused will be donated to SCARCE, which has a partnership with NIKE. SCARCE will ship the shoes to NIKE and the shoes will be recycled.

Puffer Penny Wars raises nearly \$1,000 for Almost Home Kids

By collecting small change, students at Henry Puffer School recently made a big difference for Almost Home Kids in Naperville.



The school's student council organized a Penny Wars competition at the school to collect money for the organization, whose mission is to enhance the lives of children facing serious and ongoing medical challenges. Over the course of several weeks, Puffer students raised nearly \$900 for the organization. Staff chipped in another \$70, bringing the grand total to \$950.15.

On March 15, Mike Busse, president of Community Bank of Downers Grove and a board member at Almost Home Kids, visited the school to thank the students and staff and accept the donation on behalf of the organization.

"Almost Home Kids provides services for families with medically fragile children, training for family members who need to learn how to work with medical equipment that the kids are reliant on, and also provide respite services," Busse said. "We are so grateful to the students and staff at Henry Puffer School for their generosity."

"Everyone worked really hard to collect money for the contest, and we thank you for all of the services that you provide for the families and the kids," said student council president Mary Kate Wilson, who presented the donation to Busse.

Herrick vs. O'Neill dodgeball tournament raises funds for Ronald McDonald House

The HOPE Club (Helping Ordinary People Everyday) at Herrick Middle School and student council at O'Neill Middle School teamed up March 8 to host a dodgeball tournament for charity! The event raised more than \$125 for Ronald McDonald House.

Whittier students bright senior citizens' day with Valentines

Students at Whittier School brightened Valentines Day for senior citizens in local retirement communities by creating handmade cards for them! [Click here to check out some photos from the activity.](#)



Hillcrest students raise nearly \$4,000 for American Heart Association

Students at Hillcrest School participated in Jump Rope for Heart during P.E. classes on February 14 and 15, raising \$3,899 for the American Heart Association! The Hillcrest tradition is in its seventh year, and the school has raised more than \$32,000 for the American Heart Association.

"Research, education, CPR training, and heart health awareness will continue to enhance the quality of life for ourselves and others, thanks to the students' efforts," said Hillcrest Principal Paula Thomas.

Lester students partner to make a difference for Sandy victims

Great things can happen when students put their minds together. Lester sixth-grade student Katie Lyda traveled to New York City over the winter holidays, where she saw firsthand the devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy. "I felt really bad for the people who lived there, because they all lost their homes," she said. She partnered with classmate Parker McGuire to make a difference. The two had made bracelets for fun in the past, and decided to sell them to raise money. On Feb. 13, Katie and Parker brought 160 bracelets to school to sell for 50 cents apiece, dubbing their campaign "Bandy for Sandy." They quickly sold out of their supply, and took orders for another 200! Friends helped them complete their orders with a bracelet-making party. With proceeds from the bracelet sales, coupled with donations from Lester students and staff, Katie and Parker collected \$310 that will be donated to the American Red Cross to help victims of Hurricane Sandy. "It feels really good. We're talking about doing even more fundraisers," Katie said. "It made me feel like people actually cared about people that were hurt," Parker said. "That made me feel happy."



Puffer third-grader donates books, supplies to benefit Jamaican children

When Gabriella Frank and her family visited the West End Early Childhood Institution in Jamaica last year to participate in the weekly Sandals Foundation Reading Road Trip, she was struck by the needs of the school and its students. "We saw that children had to share supplies, even pencils, and I wanted to do something to help," she said. Gabriella, who took first place in last year's Kohl's KidsWho Care contest for her generosity, decided to spearhead a school supply drive. In honor of her ninth birthday, her goal was to collect and purchase 99 books, 99 pencils, 99 sets of crayons and markers and other school supplies. She exceeded that goal, accumulating 117 pencils, 127 books, and more than 100 packs of crayons. "Everyone got something that they can use," Gabriella said. When Gabriella and her family traveled to Jamaica over winter break, she delivered the donation to a representative from the Sandals Foundation, which has adopted the West End Early Childhood Institution. "The Sandals Foundation's ongoing book drives have resulted in thousands of books being filtered into the Caribbean's school system, and we are extremely proud to have ambassadors like Gabriella who help us to make this difference in our communities," Sandals Regional Public Relations Manager (Negril) Kendra Johnson told the Jamaica Observer. Through the Sandals Foundation, Gabriella's donation will be shared among the Negril Branch Library and several schools in Westmoreland, according to the Observer.



El Sierra raises \$1,500 for American Heart Association

In the spirit of February, hearts, and Valentine's Day, gym teachers Jean Schue and Brian Zak sponsored Jump Rope for Heart at El Sierra School. The students raised \$1,500 for the Heart Association by getting donations for jumping rope. "We are very proud of the children and their goodwill," said El Sierra Principal Lucille Carney.

O'Neill student council raising funds for St. Baldrick's--with special incentive

If the O'Neill Middle School student council meets its goal of raising \$4,500 during the next month to support childhood cancer research, student council sponsor Meg Van Dyke has promised to shave her head during the St. Baldrick's Foundation event at Downers Grove South High School this spring. Students also sold cans of Crush soda Feb. 11-13, for delivery on Valentine's Day with a note, and

students from Downers Grove South will visit O'Neill during lunch periods Feb. 26 to talk with the students about the St. Baldrick's Foundation.

Those interested in helping the group meet its goal can dine at Buffalo Wild Wings on Route 53 near Seven Bridges **Monday, Feb. 25**. Ten percent of the bill for all diners who bring [this flyer](#) will be donated to the cause. The offer is good all day, and is valid for dine-in or carry-out purchases. McDonald's on Ogden Avenue also will host a dine-and-share from 4 to 7 p.m. **Thursday, March 7**; no flyer is needed. In addition, donations can be made online at <http://www.stbaldricks.org/participants/mypage/participantid/586612><http://www.stbaldricks.org/participants/mypage/participantid/586612>.

Herrick student council Valentine activity to warm the hearts of veterans

The Herrick Middle School Student Council invited students to make a Valentine for a veteran during lunch. All students who made a Valentine got a free Valentine to send to a friend. In all, students made 120 Valentines, which will be delivered to the Hines VA Hospital on Feb. 13 for delivery to veterans on Feb. 14.

Fairmount to hold candy estimation contest to support Feed My Starving Children

Fairmount is excited about Valentines Day! The student council, in recognition of this very special day, will provide an opportunity for all students to donate to Feed My Starving Children by participating in a candy estimation contest. Tickets for the contest are 25 cents per guess, or \$1 for five guesses. Student council officers will visit classrooms in the morning to collect guesses and donations, with all money going to Feed My Starving Children.

Belle Aire continues Soup for Super Bowl tradition

During the week of January 28, the Belle Aire student council continued its Soup for Super Bowl tradition. Students brought in non-perishable food items and placed them in the box decorated for the team they hope will win the game. All food will be donated to the FISH food pantry in Downers Grove.

Belle Aire student council sponsors Hat Day for Make-a-Wish Foundation

To show support for all the great work of the Illinois Chapter of Make-A-Wish Foundation (<http://www.wishes.org/>), the Belle Aire School student council sponsored a hat day on January 24. Any child was allowed to wear their favorite hat in the building that day in exchange for a \$1 donation to Make-A-Wish, which helps wishes come true for seriously ill children. All proceeds will go directly to help children in Illinois.

District 58 schools raise funds for Sandy relief

After Superstorm Sandy hit the East Coast, students and staff in District 58 were inspired to help. During the past few months, schools raised money through a variety of activities to donate to the American Red Cross for the relief efforts.



A "hats for hurricane relief" at Lester School, in which students could pay to wear a hat during the school day, raised nearly \$800 for hurricane relief.

El Sierra School's student council sold Halloween candy as a fundraiser for the school--but after Superstorm Sandy hit, the students voted to change it to a community service project. Dubbed "Candy for Sandy," the activity raised \$90 to send to the American Red Cross. Staff's Jingle Jeans charity drive, in which teachers paid \$1 a day to wear jeans the two weeks prior to winter break, raised an additional \$250 for Sandy relief.

The Belle Aire student council's combination of \$1 for students to wear hats and \$5 for teachers to wear jeans raised \$200, and Fairmount's student council also sponsored a Hat Day for hurricane relief. Kingsley School's hat day fundraiser for students and jeans day fundraiser for staff brought in \$400. Whittier School's student council collected \$400 for victims of Superstorm Sandy, and a donut hole breakfast at Henry Puffer School resulted in a \$119.50 donation to the American Red Cross for Sandy relief.

"We are so impressed with the generosity of our students, their families, and our staff. They are so very willing to help those in need," said Superintendent Kari Cremascoli.

Lester students participate in MDA 'packing party' over winter break

A group of Lester School students gave a wonderful gift to the Muscular Dystrophy Association during winter break: the gift of their time. From 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Dec. 27, 12 sixth-graders and one former Lester student participated in an MDA "packing party." During the party, the students helped the MDA create packages for schools, community businesses and other organizations to promote awareness of Muscular Dystrophy and its effects. Included in the packages were dates for events, descriptions of the disease and its effects on children, and stories of lives the disease has touched.



"It was a great team effort, as the students had fun working together and getting to understand the disease itself and why it was important to raise awareness and volunteer for a great cause. The students worked hard the whole time and truly represented Lester School and District 58 with pride and respect," said Lester Assistant Principal Ted Krillies, who participated in the event along with the students. "I am so proud of their efforts, especially during their Christmas break, and the MDA was even gracious enough to give our great students a pizza luncheon for their efforts."

El Sierra students collect money for book donation

A recent "book battle" at El Sierra School raised \$269.22 for books for the school's library, which also resulted in Scholastic donating 269 books to charity in the name of El Sierra! The winning classrooms, which will receive two free books and an ice cream party, were Lindsay Marcum's first grade, Vann Bennett's third grade, and Meg Adams' fifth grade. The activity was organized by the El Sierra student council.

O'Neill eighth grade students write greeting cards to hospitalized veterans

The eighth grade Social Studies students at O'Neill Middle School recently participated in a worthy cause, the writing of a holiday greeting card to a hospitalized veteran. After contact was made with the Hines Veterans Administration Hospital, the eighth grade students took a small portion of class time to send these season's greetings. References to thanks for service to country and best wishes for a quick return to health were frequent inclusions. The recipients of these cards are all in-patient, some staying for months at a time, looking to heal injuries or illnesses. This activity also merited inclusion in O'Neill's Rachel's Challenge efforts, as each student also wrote a link to O'Neill's growing chain of celebrations for acts of kindness done to and for others. "I wrote a holiday greeting card to a hospitalized veteran" had a nice sound to it, especially in this holiday season. In total, the O'Neill eighth grade students sent more than 200 cards to the Hines Veterans Administration Hospital.



***UPDATE: The student council recently received a letter from the Hines VA Hospital thanking them for their thoughtfulness. It read: Dear friends and eighth grade students: Thank you for your holiday greetings. It is very obvious that your group put much time and effort into this project. For many of our veteran patients, the holidays can be a difficult time, but your thoughtfulness helps make it less lonely. On behalf of the patients and staff of Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital, I extend our appreciation and look forward to your continued support. From-- Barbara J. Hunt, Chief, Voluntary Service*



O'Neill student council shows 'Elf' to raise funds

The O'Neill Middle School student council showed an after-school movie, "Elf," to raise funds for its Operation Santa Good Cause program that donates to families in need within District 58. More than \$600 was raised at this event.

Fairmount collects items for troops

Fairmount School recently collected items for U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Vice-President Nicole Grganto, Treasurer Marly Jakubczak and sixth grade teacher Deanna Bloom met Representative Patti Bellock when dropping off the items. Bellock's office, along with the USO, will see that the items make it to the troops for the holidays.



Lester staff focuses on charity during holiday party

All members of the Lester School staff brought books to the holiday party Dec. 14 to donate to children who will be attending PADS on Christmas. Additionally, during the party the staff wrapped approximately 100 books for the Downers Grove Anderson Bookshop Angel Program, which donates books to needy area organizations.

Herrick, O'Neill team up to collect items for Wet Nose Food Pantry

The O'Neill Middle School student council and the Herrick Middle School HOPE (Helping Ordinary People Everyday) Club recently teamed up to collect nearly 500 pounds of dog and cat food and boxes



of treats, toys and supplies for the Wet Nose Food Pantry, which serves pets of families in need. Kate Quinn, who graduated from O'Neill in 1993, helped found the Wet Nose Pantry, and approached the student council about donating items. For more information about the Wet Nose Food Pantry, visit <http://wetnosepetfoodpantry.webstarts.com/>.

Whittier student council helps those in need

Whittier School's student council has been very busy. First, we donated 144 pounds or 18 bags of Halloween Candy to The Family Resource Center. Next we collected money for the victims of Hurricane Sandy. We will donate about \$400 to The United Way. Finally, we are going to have a Holiday Hop (dance), and a candy cane sale. We are going to donate the money we raise to honor Mr. (Stan) Racki.

--Submitted by the Whittier School student council

Fairmount collects gently used clothing to help Sandy victims

The Fairmount School Student Council, along with the entire Fairmount student body, collected just under 30 giant bags of gently used clothing for the victims of Super Storm Sandy on the East Coast. The items were given to the Salvation Army for delivery.



Indian Trail third and fourth grade students collecting toiletries for homeless, less fortunate

In an effort to help those who are homeless or less fortunate, third and fourth grade students at Indian Trail School are bringing in toiletries to donate to Journeys, a collaboration between the PADS shelter and HOME center. A representative from Journeys came in to discuss homelessness with students during the week of Dec. 3, and each class is collecting a different item, such as shampoo and conditioner, a razor and shaving cream, deodorant and soap, tube socks, and a toothbrush and toothpaste. They will assemble the items to donate the week of December 17.

El Sierra fifth-graders pack meals, raise money for Feed My Starving Children

El Sierra fifth graders took a field trip Nov. 26 to Feed My Starving Children in Aurora. This is a charity where volunteers can go to package meals that are sent around the world to people who would otherwise go hungry. "We wanted to go this time of year as it is the season of giving," said student council co-sponsor Maura Prekwas. They spent two hours packing meals in an assembly-line style. There was fun music playing loudly and the kids were able to yell their country's name whenever they filled a box with food, so occasionally the room would erupt with cries of "Cambodia!" or "Haiti!" The kids danced and worked and yelled and had a great time. They had been asked to bring in change beforehand so they could donate to help pay for the food that was packaged, and ended up raising \$137! In their two hours there, they packaged enough food for 47 kids to eat for an entire year. "The kids were so happy and felt good about doing something for someone else," Prekwas said.



Lester student council supports Project Frontlines

In celebration of Veteran's Day, the Lester School student council sponsored a drive to support Project Frontlines, collecting items to make care packages for soldiers serving overseas. Lester is paired with a Navy Construction Battalion currently serving in a remote location, tasked with renovating a school and putting up another important building for the country. The Lester student council collected 25 large boxes of donation items, including snacks, toiletries, games and books to send to this platoon. Many classes also wrote letters and poems to include in the packages. The PTA paid the shipping costs.

El Sierra collects more than 450 items in food drive

The El Sierra student council conducted its annual food drive Nov. 5-16. A total of 452 items were collected, an increase over last year's collection of 300 items! Each grade level was assigned a specific type of food to bring in--for example, kindergarten students were to bring in cereal, second-graders were to bring in canned vegetables and fifth grade students were to bring in condiments. The grade level with the most items earned an ice cream party. Second grade won the competition with 144 items. The food was donated to the FISH pantry in Downers Grove.

Puffer teacher puckers up for pig for a good cause

The competition was on at Henry Puffer the week of Thanksgiving break--students were asked to "vote" with their change as to which staff member they most wanted to see kiss a pig! The initiative raised more than \$300 to purchase grocery store gift cards for needy families at the school--and resulted in first-grade teacher Janice Nelson puckering up for Penny the pig. The other two finalists were Principal Todd McDaniel and LRC Director Gwen Box.



Indian Trail collects coins for book donation

In advance of the Scholastic Book Fair on Oct. 11-12, the Indian Trail School PTA brought back its annual All For Books coin collection, which purchases needed books for Indian Trail and provides books to disadvantaged children. Families donated more than \$500 to the effort, resulting in \$25 in new books for each classroom at Indian Trail and a matching amount of books purchased by Scholastic for disadvantaged children. The kindergarten class collected the most money, and celebrated with an ice cream party on Nov. 28!

Highland Giving Tree supporting those in need

The Highland Student Council is again sponsoring the school's annual Giving Tree to help make the holidays a little happier for those in need in the community. The Giving Tree is collecting warm mittens, gloves, scarves, and coats, as well as new and used winter clothing, for those less fortunate.

Kingsley student council donates to Hurricane Sandy relief efforts

The Kingsley School student council coordinated a special Hats for Hurricane Relief fundraiser earlier this month, in which students could donate money to wear a hat to school. The money raised from that activity, as well as money from the Gobble Grams the student council sold the week prior to Thanksgiving, will be sent to the American Red Cross for Hurricane Sandy relief efforts. In addition, staff donated \$5 to wear jeans the week of Thanksgiving break, which also will go to the American Red Cross.



[Click here to view more photos from Kingsley's fundraisers!](#)

Hillcrest Green Team unwraps crayons for Meltdown project

In October, the Hillcrest School Green Team helped SCARCE (School and Community Assistance for Recycling and Composting Education) with their Meltdown project. The Meltdown project collects and melts down old crayons to create new crayons for students in need, and the Green Team assisted by unwrapping hundreds of crayons!



Herrick supporting Hope for Hunter

Herrick Middle School is supporting Hope for Hunter, set up to help a 14-year-old Darien resident who was severely injured when a truck hit him last February. One of Hunter's football teammates is spearheading the effort at Herrick, which includes a Hat Day for Hunter Nov. 26. Students who donated at least \$1 received a ticket to wear a hat at school that day. Students also received Hope For Hunter pencils, and were encouraged to take time during their lunch period November 27 to write Hunter and his family a nice card. For more information, visit Hunter's website, <http://hope-4-hunter.org>.



Pierce Downer candy drive encourages healthy habits, supports troops

For the second year in a row, the Pierce Downer PTA offered students the opportunity to turn in their surplus candy for a good cause. The PTA teamed up with FedEx and Operation Gratitude to collect candy to send to U.S. troops serving overseas. Students were also encouraged to write letters or make a homemade card to express their thanks to the men and women serving in the U.S. military. The PTA collected more than 400 pounds of candy and received enthusiastic support from students. The candy drive was held the week after Halloween and is just one of the many events the Pierce Downer PTA's Healthy Kids Committee organizes throughout the year to encourage kids to make healthy choices. Operation Gratitude annually sends 100,000 care packages filled with snacks, entertainment items and personal letters of appreciation to U.S. service members. Their mission is to lift morale, bring a smile to a service member's face and express to our Armed Forces the appreciation and support of the American people.



Bloom's Angels event brings in funds for less fortunate at Herrick

Herrick Middle School's Nov. 9 Family Fun Night fundraiser for Bloom's Angels drew a crowd of more than 700 and raised more than \$7,300 for the organization that benefits less fortunate families at the school. The fundraiser featured a crosstown boy's basketball game versus Jefferson Junior High at Downers Grove North High School, as well as a raffle and silent auction. Bloom's Angels was founded in memory of Barb Blumenschein, who passed away in 2006. In the past six years, Bloom's Angels has raised and given back more than



\$10,000 to help students and families in need of assistance. "It was exciting to see our community come together and support such a wonderful cause. I'm sure this will become a Herrick tradition and one that we should all be very proud to support," said Bloom's Angels co-founder Gail Pistello. For more information about Bloom's Angels, visit Herrick's website, www.dg58.org/he, or e-mail gpistello@dg58.org.

Fairmount hosts 'Hat Day' for hurricane relief

In response to the devastation of Hurricane Sandy, the Fairmount Student Council sponsored a "Hat Day" for hurricane relief. Students were allowed to wear hats in school all day November 9 for a \$1 donation. The money collected will be sent to the American Red Cross/Hurricane Sandy Relief Fund. "Our hearts here at Fairmount go out to the numerous communities in multiple states along the Eastern seaboard of the United States who are suffering as a result of this historic storm. I am proud to see our students recognizing a need to help others and then putting together a plan to try and make a difference," said Principal Tony Coglianese.



[Click here for more fabulous Fairmount hat photos!](#)

Belle Aire student council holds Penny Harvest

The Belle Aire student council held its annual Penny Harvest the week of Nov. 12, visiting all of the classrooms each day with their change wagon! With the help of generous Belle Aire families, the student council has been able to provide food for the needy in the Downers Grove area.

O'Neill collects candy for troops

The O'Neill Student Council recently collected leftover and unwanted candy from Halloween to send to soldiers overseas! Do you have a friend or relative in the service who would like to receive a box filled with candy and thank-you cards? Please e-mail Dr. Meg Van Dyke, mvandyke@dg58.org, the complete military address and the student council will send them one.

Fairmount staff wear Jeans for a Cure

The Fairmount School faculty and staff raised \$475 for the Komen Foundation to help fight the battle against breast cancer by "purchasing permission" to wear jeans during the month of October. October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Puffer benefits from alumnus' Eagle Scout project

As part of the process of attaining the rank of Eagle Scout, Puffer alum Ben Woods planned, organized and executed a thorough cleaning, repainting and installation of new shelving in the old coal room located under the kindergarten classroom at Puffer where the school, PTA and Scouts all store items. The project was completed in August. Woods is the son of Puffer teacher Jennifer Woods. "Thanks to Ben's efforts, our



school, PTA and Scouts have an area for storage that is cleaner and highly organized," said Puffer Principal Todd McDaniel.

O'Neill eighth-graders team up for JDRF

A team of eighth-grade students from O'Neill Middle School participated in this year's Ron Santo Walk for a Cure Oct. 14 to raise funds for juvenile diabetes research. Along with help from O'Neill's student council, this team of boys -- Jack, Zevin, Matt and Nick -- raised more than \$10,000 for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation this year! Jack was on the news the morning of Oct. 13 as an ambassador for the event, and last year was invited to flip the coin at the Bears game as a guest of JDRF supporter Jay Cutler.



Hillcrest has new map, thanks to former student

This school year, Hillcrest students and teachers are enjoying a new addition to the school: a large and colorful map of the United States on the blacktop. The map is the work of Hillcrest alum Dan Mohr. He directed the painting of the map for his Eagle Project, including the production of learning materials to supplement the map. The painting was conducted on August 3, and a number of current and former Hillcrest students participated!



Whittier families pack meals for Feed My Starving Children

Several Whittier families volunteered their time to pack food at Feed My Starving Children on September 27. They packed 17 boxes for a total of 3,672 meals, which will feed 10 children for a year!

[Click here to view a photo gallery from the activity.](#)



O'Neill student council supports former officer

The O'Neill Middle School student council recently showed its support for one of last year's eighth-grade officers who is currently at Children's Hospital recovering from brain surgery. The student council made a banner, collected goodies (magazines, word searches, lip gloss, glow necklaces, an iTunes gift card and other fun items). Family friend and staff member Bev West took the care package, along with a check from staff for family night out, to Children's Hospital Sept. 14.

