



St. Martha students in Enfield aid orphanage and school in Haiti

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By

ENFIELD - Students at **St. Martha School** have donated more than \$2,400 to needy orphans in Haiti as part of a Lenten project.

The students at the Catholic school, a kindergarten through eighth-grade school which often reaches out to the needy, donated the funds to the orphanage sponsored by Movin' with the Spirit, a Connecticut-based Catholic charity.

This latest project is an extension of others St. Martha students have participated in in the past to benefit needy people in Haiti. Students have also helped to raise funds to build six houses in the impoverished country.

"About a year ago, I ran into one of our graduates, and she was telling me about working at an orphanage in Haiti," said teacher Jean Bodman, who helped coordinate this project with Movin' with the Spirit. "Her mother came and spoke to the kids about it."

The school did some research and eventually connected with Movin' with the Spirit, led by Sean Forrest.

"He started out building an orphanage for 15 children, and expanded it to include a school," Bodman said. "Our donation was to help the school."

Students came up with some creative ways to raise funds for the cause.

"First we had dress-down days, and if you brought in a dollar every day, you could dress down," said eighth-grader Bridget Logan. "Or, you could buy hemp bracelets made by someone in Haiti for \$10. They



Submitted photo

St. Martha School students wear hemp bracelets to show support for their project to help a Haitian orphanage as part of the school's 2012 Lenten project.

came in a little bag and inside was a picture of a child from Haiti, a little bit about them and how they needed help.”

Bodman said collecting money was the easiest way to give to the children.

“We know it’s going to the school and orphanage,” she said. “It’s too difficult to send books or other items, so we trust the organization to get what they need (with our donations).” Principal Ann Sarpu said the school has always been committed to charitable giving.

“As a Catholic school, when we think about Lent, we think about fasting, prayer or charitable giving,” Sarpu said. “At the beginning of Lent, in speaking to my teachers and thinking about people who are less fortunate, we knew we have had a commitment to Haiti for the past few years.”

After the students saw the presentation of what has been accomplished with their donations to Haiti in previous years, they knew what they wanted to do.

“They had a visual of what it’s like in Haiti, a visual of the children there,” she said. “It’s obvious how fortunate they are, comparatively speaking.”

It certainly hit home for eighth-grade student Thomas Angell.

“Seeing the pictures and seeing how poor people in Haiti were, it kind of shocked us,” Angell said. “It was great to see who we were helping, how we were helping and what they needed help with.”

Sarpu said it’s all part of the philosophy of the school.

“The students are always extremely generous no matter what cause we’re thinking about,” she said. “At Christmas they brought in gifts and wrapping paper and we wrapped hundreds of gifts to give to (social service) agencies in Enfield and surrounding towns. It’s amazing to see the generosity of the children and the families here at St. Martha.”

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