



Indian Trail donates games to Good Samaritan pediatric ward

Indian Trail students paid a visit to the pediatric ward at Good Samaritan Hospital June 5 to donate a basket full of games they had purchased for the young patients and their families to enjoy. The money for the games was collected through a program called Bucks for Bananas that was started by a group of students and Title 1 instructional assistant Robin Effrein. Each day, students play Bananagrams at Effrein's table during lunch and lunch recess. Eventually, there was so much interest that they decided to ask for spare change donations

from anyone who wanted to play. Since January they collected more than \$100, which was used to buy Bananagrams, as well as copies of related games Pairs in Pears and Appletters, for the children's floor at the hospital. On June 5, Effrein, along with students Katie Anthony, Jessica Windischman, Priya Patel and Annemarie Elser, stopped by to deliver the games and a card signed by many of the Indian Trail Bananagrams players. "That was a great idea, and the kids will really love it," said Peggy Farrell, manager of the neonatal intensive care unit and pediatrics at Good Samaritan Hospital.



O'Neill holds car wash fundraiser

Despite rainy, cold weather on May 12, the O'Neill student council spent several hours washing cars to raise funds for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Illinois. They brought in a total of \$250!



Pierce Downer brings in more than \$500 in change for St. Jude's

The student council at Pierce Downer School organized a change collection to benefit St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital. The school-wide drive ran through May 21, and the students collected a total of \$510.11! The mission of St. Jude's, according to its website, is "to find cures for children with cancer and other life-threatening diseases through research and treatment," and families are never charged.



O'Neill student council hosts dodgeball battle for charity

The O'Neill Middle School student council hosted a dodgeball tournament last month to raise money for Feed My Starving Children in Aurora. Twelve teams battled April 24, and the final round and teacher game took place April 26. The eighth grade team, Martin Nika, won the tournament but was not strong enough to beat the male O'Neill staff. The ladies' staff team, with student ringer Krissy Lea, beat the second-place student team, the Squirrel Hunters of America. Squirrels: Jack Girard, Danny Madison, Jack Taus, Weston Valkner and Chris Neuman. Martin Nika: Erich Nika, Robert Justus, Sam Ebersold, Kevin Collins, Cory Vondra and coach Nick Hanek. Staff team:

Sarah Brost, Kate Baum, Ellen Reitsma, Janet Frano, Kelly Messineo and Krissy Lea.

Hillcrest holds Math-a-Thon for St. Jude's

Hillcrest has been raising money for St. Jude's Children's Hospital, known for its pioneering work in finding cures and saving children with cancer and other diseases, since 1986. To date, the school has raised and donated an amazing \$217,784 to St. Jude's, including nearly \$5,000 raised during this year's Math-a-Thon.

Herrick to host community blood drive

Herrick Middle School will host a blood drive from noon to 4 p.m. Thursday, May 31 in Room 215. A photo ID is required. Appointments are appreciated; sign up at www.heartlandbc.org or contact teacher Sarah Conway at sconway@dg58.org. Donors will receive an \$11 Oberweis gift card. For information about eligibility, call Heartland Blood Centers at 1-800-7-TO-GIVE. The final eighth-grade science unit at Herrick this year focuses on cancer, and instead of doing a final project or test, staff and students decided to do a community outreach project to help individuals who are suffering or have been affected by cancer.

O'Neill students raising funds for genocide awareness

Eighth graders at O'Neill Middle School will be doing their part to raise awareness of past and present genocides during their annual fundraising campaign, "Got Awareness," and there are several opportunities for community members to support the cause. This year students will hold several fundraisers to bring in money for the Jewish World Watch Sister Schools project, which is building schools in Chad for Sudanese refugees; and for the Sudanese Community Center, which assists Sudanese living in the Chicago area area to acclimate to America. bd's Mongolian Grill at the Bolingbrook Promenade will donate \$3 for every person who comes in from 6 to 9 p.m. **Thursday, May 10**, and says they are there for the guest grillers--O'Neill Middle School staff. [Click here](#) to view a copy of the flyer for this event. On **Sunday, May 20**, Buffalo Wild Wings by the Seven Bridges Movie Theater in Woodridge will donate 20 percent of the bill for every dine-in or carryout customer who turns in [this event flyer](#). The students will also sell wristbands and gift basket raffle tickets during all lunch periods the week of May 7 to raise awareness about genocides throughout the world and raise funds for the various charities.

Pasta prize motivates donations at Indian Trail

The chance to win a free lunch – and give money to a good cause at the same time -- was just the motivation Indian Trail students needed to donate coins to support the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Through the student council's Pasta for Pennies program, the class that donated the most money per student won a lunch from Olive Garden of pasta, salad and breadsticks. During the two weeks of the fundraiser, the school collected a total of \$1,639.16 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. The winning classroom, Krystal Gray's fourth grade, collected \$244.86.



Lester dogs vs. cats battle benefits Humane Society

A dogs vs. cats donation battle organized by a group of motivated fifth-grade students at Lester School, who call themselves Lester Students Serving as Animal Heroes (LSSAH), brought in more than 150 items for the West Suburban Humane Society in Downers Grove. The donation battle, which took place April 23-25, brought in 97 items for dogs and 58 items for cats. The West Suburban Humane Society picked up the donations the morning of April 25, and brought along a sweet little pup named Suzy for the students to hold and play with outside. The students designed the flyer

and wrote the letter that was sent home, and families donated nearly everything that was requested, from paper towels and detergent to food and toys. LSSAH includes Ava Nolan, Shelby Berghorst, Mackenzie Woods, Mike Thollander, Alena Spreitzer, Camryn Farrington and Nicholas Wagner, led by social work intern Samantha McGann.

Puffer donates pop tabs to Ronald McDonald House



Henry Puffer School recently donated 42 milk jugs to the Ronald McDonald House! The school participated in a class competition from January until spring break at the end of March, and pop tabs were weighed weekly. The class in the lead in January got Happy Meal toys for each student. The class that had the most at the end of February had an ice cream party, and the class with the most at the end of March will be having a Happy Meal lunch. Kelly Williams' fourth-grade class won each month!

El Sierra completes pet food, supply drive

The El Sierra student council held the school's first-ever pet food and supply drive March 19-23, during which students were asked to bring in items for dogs and cats. By the end of the week, more than 100 items were donated for A Cry for Help Animal Shelter, including pet food, toys, clothing, accessories, tennis balls, doggie bags, leashes and collars. A Cry For Help has adoption events every weekend at Petco, located at 1400 75th St., Downers Grove.



Herrick and O'Neill groups team up to pack meals

The Herrick Middle School HOPE (Helping Ordinary People Everyday) Club and the O'Neill Middle School student council recently joined forces to pack food at the Aurora facility of Feed My Starving Children. In just two hours on March 23, the students packed more than 19,000 meals for children in need of nutrition in Haiti and Africa.

O'Neill student council works with Downers Grove South to raise money for St. Baldrick's

The O'Neill Middle School Student Council worked with Downers Grove South High School this year to raise money for the St. Baldrick's Foundation. Activities included selling T-shirts, wristbands and cans of Crush on Valentine's Day. O'Neill eighth-grader Megan Riordan had her head shaved and raised more than \$2,700 towards Downers Grove South's total of \$65,000. "It was courage in action to witness," said O'Neill student council sponsor Meg Van Dyke.

Hillcrest first-graders raise nearly \$9,000 for St. Baldrick's

When a team of three Hillcrest students recently decided to have their heads shaved for the St. Baldrick's Foundation, they set a fundraising goal of \$800—and ended up bringing in nearly \$9,000. Matt Oko and Declan Trant, both in Amy Flannery's first-grade class at Hillcrest School, formed Abby's



Army in honor of a relative of Matt's who was diagnosed with Neuroblastoma at age four. Classmate Eryn Becker joined the team in honor of a friend who recently was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia.

Declan colored his hair green several days prior to the event because his uncle told him he would double his own donation if Declan did so. Eryn had such long hair that not only did she raise money for St. Baldrick's through pledges to shave her head, she also was able to keep her ponytail to donate to Locks of Love. Matt's grandmother got so into the fundraising for St. Baldrick's that she was fighting the doctors to release her from the hospital so she could attend the event. She presented Matt with nearly \$3,000 that she

received from family, friends and many members of the VFW and women's auxiliary in Wheaton.

[Click here to view the full story and photos from the event!](#)

Belle Aire student council raffle benefits tornado victims

The Belle Aire student council sponsored a Reading Raffle March 6-9 to raise funds to support the victims of the Harrisburg tornado. Tickets were 50 cents each, and participants had a chance to win reading-themed prizes, including autographed copies of goods by authors Jim Aylesworth and Phil Bildner, who visited Belle Aire during this year's Author Fest. The raffle raised a total of \$165.75, which was sent to the American Red Cross.

El Sierra student council collects nearly \$1,500 for charity

Through a variety of fundraising activities, including Penny Wars, Candy Gram sales and holiday bracelet sales, the student council at El Sierra School has brought in nearly \$1,500 to donate to charities so far this school year!



Indian Trail collects food for FISH

A recent food drive at Indian Trail brought in a total of 309 cans for the FISH pantry in Downers Grove! The kindergartners (right) were proud to show the many boxes that were filled with food items for the pantry.



Whittier's Teeny Tiny Team sells 'Hearts for Noah's Hope'

On Feb. 11, the Teeny Tiny Team, Inc., which was formed at Whittier in 2008 by students who were just 7 years old, sold "Hearts for Noah's Hope" for the third straight year. The hearts were made by team members and were sold in the lobby of the Tivoli Theatre during a special showing of E.T., which also was a benefit for the charity Noah's Hope. After the movie was done, Team members went to Spice Merchants, Fair Game, Consider it Done, Gallery's Choice, My Favorite Toy Store and Happy Dog Barkery to continue selling hearts for the afternoon. All total the Team raised \$740, which will be donated to Noah's Hope! Noah's Hope is their favorite

organization because they have a real connection to the kids. They've loved meeting them and are heartbroken by the decline in the health of Laine and Noah, siblings who have been diagnosed with the rare genetic illness LINCL-Batten Disease. The Teeny Tiny Team has raised more than \$5,400, which has been donated to many different charitable organizations. The Team has also made fleece blankets for pediatric hospital patients, packed meals at Feed My Starving Children, collected toys and books for charity and cleaned up an Evanston beach. Their motto is "We may be small, but we do big things."



Belle Aire buddies make cards for veterans

Jill Oakley's third grade students and Heather Howland's morning kindergarten students recently worked together to make Valentine's Day cards for local veterans. The third grade and kindergarten students are buddies, and have been meeting every Friday to work on different projects. Recently, they decided to do some good and make a veteran smile. All of the students really enjoyed working with their buddy to make cards.

Kingsley Taking Action is making a difference

A fifth-grade service club at Kingsley School called Kingsley Taking Action, which meets during lunch, has accomplished great things so far this year. In January, the club spent time feeding the hungry all over the world. A website called FreeRice.com will donate grains of rice to third world countries every time a person answers their trivia questions correctly. The fifth grade KTA members have been keeping track of the amount of rice they have donated, and so far it has been over 9,000 grains of rice! Others can help by visiting freerice.com and participating in the trivia. This month, KTA is making coloring books for children at the Comer Children's Hospital, which is located in Hyde Park. These books will be given to the hospital at the end of February. The club will also



be donating books to The Painted Turtle, a camp in California for children with chronic medical conditions.

Indian Trail trying to top last year's fundraiser

Indian Trail students have been busy collecting pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters. Not only is the school as a whole trying to top the more than \$1,800 it raised last year for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, but the class that donates the most money per student will win a lunch from Olive Garden of pasta, salad and breadsticks. The students will be collecting change in their classrooms through Friday, Feb. 24. Each Friday during the fundraiser, student council representatives have been collecting the change from the classroom boxes and bringing them to student council sponsor and fifth-grade teacher Sandy Leff for counting. Posters in the hallway are tracking the progress of the fundraiser.

Herrick student raises funds for cancer research

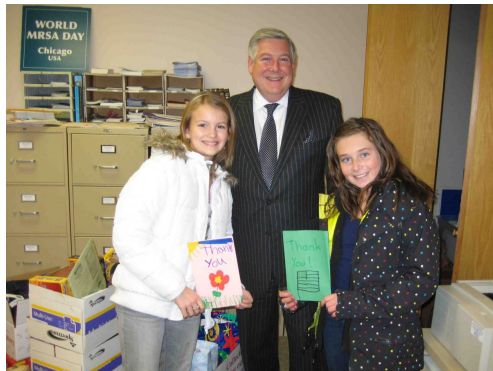
Herrick Middle School eighth-grader Rowan Miller is making a difference for cancer research at Comer Children's Hospital. Last year he held a March Madness bracket pool at school, with the winner receiving a small cash prize and the rest of the money – \$800 – going to cancer research. Rowan's cousin used to do the brackets to collect money for Comer, and Rowan inherited the project once his cousin went to high school. Over the years, the two boys have raised more than \$3,000 for cancer research. Rowan, whose grandfather was a cancer researcher and whose grandmother had a stem cell transplant at Comer several years ago, plans to do the brackets at Herrick again this year.

Puffer penny war benefits Wounded Warrior Project

The students at Henry Puffer School recently engaged in some friendly competition, and their Penny Wars fundraiser brought in a total of \$892.40 for the Wounded Warriors Project. The student council chose this organization as the target for their fundraiser. The classes who brought in the most money--Carrie Edwards' second-grade in primary and Tim Fredrickson's sixth-grade class in intermediate--will receive a donut and milk party. Edwards' class raised \$67.07, and Fredrickson's class raised \$216.14.

Lester, Belle Aire, El Sierra host 'Soup-er Bowl'

During the week leading up to the Super Bowl, Lester, Belle Aire and El Sierra schools all hosted a Soup-er Bowl canned goods drive. Students could bring in a can of soup or other food item and put it in the box of the team they think will win the Super Bowl. The canned goods were donated to various local charities, including the People's Resource Center and FISH pantry.



Fairmount sends care packages to soldiers

The Fairmount student council recently sponsored an effort to collect games, sports equipment, snacks, toiletries, books, magazines, phone cards, and homemade letters and cards for soldiers who have been deployed overseas. Fairmount families and staff members generously answered the children's call to support our troops, and the student council collected eight boxes of "goodies" to send off to the courageous men and women serving in the armed forces.

Lester kindergartners collect pop tabs

Three years ago, Lester kindergarten teacher Kathy Yee had her kindergartners start collecting pop tabs for Ronald McDonald House. She started it after her son had heart surgery, and it was her way to give back to Hope Children's Hospital in hopes that they would build a Ronald McDonald House. Her current students and some of her former students, who are now in first, second and third grade, continue to collect pop tabs.

Anyone can spearhead a pop-tab collection for Ronald



Fairmount Triple T tackles variety of service projects

A group of Fairmount School students, who have dubbed themselves Triple T, have completed a variety of service projects so far this school year. Led by Fairmount parent and Whittier reading specialist Christy Gergits, they raised money and went to Feed My Starving Children's Aurora facility; participated in the CROP Walk; baked treats for the Downers Grove police and fire departments; collected toys for Toys for Tots; and most recently adopted fire hydrants for snow removal.

Indian Trail student has a heart for giving

Indian Trail fifth-grader Melissa Weidner has been making a big difference in the life of a family whose 10-month-old baby has Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA).



She led a group of neighborhood children in a series of fundraising activities to benefit Make a Child Smile, a not-for-profit that focused on supporting children with chronic or life-threatening illnesses and their families. A fun fair at the Weidners' home this past summer brought in \$225 for Make a Child Smile. After learning that the organization was no longer accepting financial donations, Melissa and her family brainstormed how they could use the fun fair proceeds to benefit another charity. Her father works with the founder of the Angel Baby Foundation, created to comfort and assist families affected by SMA, a degenerative disease of the cells located in the spinal cord. Through the Angel Baby Foundation, Melissa learned about a family who was hoping to get an iPad to help their 10-month-old daughter, Journee, who has SMA, communicate. They donated the fun fair proceeds towards this purchase, then learned that the baby's mom needed a special carrier

to compensate for the baby's lack of neck strength. Within a week, Melissa's class at Indian Trail had raised enough money to purchase the carrier, and her family matched the amount. To thank Melissa for her generosity and support, the Angel Baby Foundation recently presented her with their Giving Tree Award—and the baby herself recently paid visited her class at Indian Trail.

O'Neill movie screening benefits families in need

The O'Neill Middle School student council hosted an after-school movie viewing of "Elf" in December to raise funds for the school's Operation Santa Good Cause, which distributes Target gift cards to families in need within District 58.

Herrick decorates lunch bags, sells Candy Grams

During the month of December, the Herrick Middle School student council decorated lunch bags that were used for PADS lunches at one of the local churches. In addition, the student council sold Candy Grams, a note to a friend accompanied by a candy cane, for 25 cents apiece. The proceeds were donated to Autism Speaks Illinois.

Whittier Holiday Hop benefits Make-a-Wish

Whittier School's student council hosted a Holiday Hop in December, which raised \$239.60 for the Make-a-Wish Foundation, and collected a total of 125 toys to donate to Toys for Tots!

El Sierra completes variety of holiday projects

During the weeks leading up to winter break, El Sierra had a mitten tree up in the front hallway where students were asked to bring in hats, scarves, mittens, and board games. They collected more items than ever before, which helped bring joy and comfort to families in need this season. In addition, El



Sierra third-grade teacher Diane Claver organized the Adopt a Family program where families could donate items to ensure other families would have a happy holiday season. The school also participated in the Macy's Dear Santa letter writing campaign where the store donated one dollar for each letter to the Make a Wish foundation. El Sierra raised nearly \$300. Last but not least, in a fundraiser they dubbed "Jingle Jeans," El Sierra staff paid \$2 a day to wear jeans on the days leading up to winter break. This brought in a total of \$185 for the Sharing Connections charity in Downers Grove!

Herrick Middle School makes cards for veterans

The Herrick Middle School student council recently set up a booth during lunch periods, where all students could stop by and make a card for a veteran using red, white and blue star stickers and flags. Sponsor Amy Kilner delivered more than 300 cards to the

Edward Hines, Jr. VA hospital near Maywood.

Puffer mitten tree benefits FISH; bake sale raises funds for childrens' cancer research

For many years now, Henry Puffer School has had a gift-giving tradition at the holidays. Instead of purchasing gifts for teachers, the K-6 teachers request that such generosity be channeled in the form of a donation (hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, socks, etc.) to the Mitten Trees. This resulted in several large boxes being donated before the holidays to the FISH pantry. In addition, the school hosted a "Cookies for Kids Cancer" sale during the annual Santa Breakfast, which raised \$153 for the cause.

Hillcrest food drive benefits FISH

The Hillcrest student council organized a food drive in late November, resulting in approximately 1,500 food items being donated to the FISH food pantry. Brittany Cerny's class was the intermediate winner and brought in 136 food items. Leslie Walker's class was the primary winner with 183 food items. Congratulations to these great classes! The workers at the FISH pantry were so thankful for all the efforts from Hillcrest students.



Kingsley collects for Operation Support Our Troops

During the two weeks leading up to winter break, the Kingsley student council collected donations for troops stationed overseas. The student council sent out flyers asking each grade level to donate a certain item listed on the Operation Support Our Troops website. Some of the items collected were canned goods, hot chocolate, beef jerky, and crackers. Student council boxed the supplies up and they were delivered to the warehouse in Lisle, where they are boxed up and shipped overseas. "This was very successful and each classroom went above and beyond what we expected," said student council sponsor Deanna Jacobs.



Lester Winter Wiggle brings in donations

In conjunction with the annual Winter Wiggle at Lester School, students brought in toys to donate to Toys for Tots, as well as more than 400 cans and boxes of non-perishable food items that were donated to the People's Resource Center (PRC) of DuPage County for their Westmont food pantry. The student

council's Penny Harvest raised nearly \$1,100 to donate to the PRC for their Thanksgiving baskets. For just \$20, PRC can provide a family with a full Thanksgiving meal. In the weeks leading up to the winter break, the student council also sponsored a Giving Tree. Students brought in new hats, mittens and gloves to hang on the holiday tree, and these warm items also were donated to the PRC. Students also wrote more than 150 letters to Santa for the Macy's fundraiser for the Make a Wish Foundation. For every letter written to Santa, Macy's donated \$1 to the Make a Wish Foundation.

Walk-In Ministry

During the holidays, Fairmount supported Make-A-Wish efforts through student writing, collected toys to enhance the holidays for others, and filled a Mitten Tree with hats, gloves, scarves, and mittens, to provide warmth for those who might otherwise go without. These items will be donated to the Walk-In Ministry of Hope. The teachers, in lieu of exchanging holiday gifts, made contributions to assist families in the Fairmount attendance area.

Pierce Downer holiday service auction benefits Feed My Starving Children, Open Arms Summer Camp

During their winter holiday party, the fifth-grade classes at Pierce Downer held their annual holiday service auction to raise money for charity. Each student was asked to bring in a gently used item to be sold at the auction, such as a book, toy or game. Students could bring up to \$3 to be used in the auction, during which they bid in 25-cent increments. Students viewed the items prior to the auction, and bid on the items they wanted to purchase. Kelly DeMarco's class voted to donate the \$110.27 they raised to Feed My Starving Children; Sue Murphy's class raised \$87, which they used to sponsor four children with Open Arms Summer Camp. "The students enjoy watching the items come in all month, and the party is always a success. We follow auction format, complete with an auctioneer and paddles," DeMarco said.

Highland Giving Tree supports FISH pantry, toy drive benefits Humanitarian Service Project

The Highland School Student Council supported two local charities in order to help out the needy in our community this holiday season: the Highland School Giving Tree and Humanitarian Service Project Toy Drive. Through these service projects the families of Highland helped to make the holidays a little happier for those in need in our community. The Highland School Giving Tree collected warm mittens, gloves, scarves, and coats as well as new and used winter clothing. These items were donated to FISH, a local organization that helps those in need in Downers Grove, Westmont, Darien, Woodridge and Lisle. New toys were collected for the Humanitarian Service Project, a DuPage community service organization that reaches approximately 100 families living in poverty. They pack up Christmas boxes which include gifts for around 500 children living in the area. Highland School families donated several large bags and boxes of toys that were dropped off the first week of December in order to get to the needy children for the holidays.

Pierce Downer food drive helps FISH

During the month of December, the Pierce Downer student council organized a school-wide food drive. Students in all classes were encouraged to donate nonperishable food items. Donated food was given to the Downers Grove Area FISH Food Pantry, which provides free food and a variety of emergency social services to those in need.



Belle Aire penny harvest brings in change for FISH

Each day from November 14-18, student council members at Belle Aire School brought the harvest wagon to each classroom, and students contributed their spare change. The drive netted \$568.27, half of which went to the FISH pantry in Downers Grove and half of which went to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Downers Grove, which hosted a Thanksgiving lunch.