

ALBERTA EDUCATION WEEK - APRIL 25 TO MAY 1

Education – the heart of our communities

LGMS – reaching out beyond our community

Memorable and lasting student learning often takes place beyond the walls of the classroom and into the community.

A group of Lawrence Grassi Middle School students are reaching out even further and making a difference in the lives of impoverished Mayan people living in communities of the Uspantan region of Guatemala.

In support of the notion of "paying it forward" as a thank you for the incredible school we have, the LGMS school community has embarked on an endeavour to give students in Guatemala a chance for a better future.

Last year, Grassi students formed a committee to assist the Canmore-based Hearts and Hands Foundation's Buy a Block Build a Future (www.heartshands.ca) fundraising campaign for the construction of new primary and secondary school classrooms in the Uspantan region.

Since the spring of 2009, the students have raised well over \$3,500 from bake sales, a classroom coin drive, a fun-run and selling salvaged bricks from the old LGMS building.

This experience is teaching students about the challenges of the world beyond their school and local community. Many of Guatemala's Mayan families cannot afford to send their children to school (their average annual income is \$250) and very few have the opportunity to attend school beyond Grade 6.

For Grassi students, it shows them they can have a positive impact on a global scale for what to them may seem like a relatively small amount of effort and money. One thousand blocks, or \$25,000, builds one classroom; the cost to build one secondary school is about \$120,000.

This past March, two Grassi students – Sara and Becca Frangos – travelled to Guatemala with a team of 30 Hearts and Hands volunteers. The timing of their trip coincided with the inauguration of a new secondary school in El Pinal funded by Hearts and Hands.

At the event, the girls spoke of their fundraising efforts at LGMS and were humbled by the depth of gratitude of the local people.

A temporary change of course for Haiti

When a devastating earthquake struck Haiti on Jan. 12, 2010, the students chose to temporarily change their focus from the people of Guatemala to the people of Haiti. Within a few short days of the disaster, classrooms organized coin drives, bake sales, root beer float sales and head-shavings to raise money.

Within two weeks, the students raised \$3,025 as they rallied around this project both financially and emotionally. Many came to realize that a significant amount of money can be raised from many small donations.

With a generous promise from Devonian Properties that they would match the school's fundraising efforts up to \$1,500, the school's total donation grew to \$4,525 and on Feb. 11, the school presented the cheque to the Canadian Red Cross.

The students hope they can continue to nurture this energy as they return their efforts to the Hearts and Hands project.



A song of thanks from the students of El Pinal.

What's next?

The students are planning the second annual Hearts and Hands and Feet Run at the end of June. Students donate a toonie to participate in the two-km fun run. Many classrooms will do additional fundraising as well. All proceeds will go to the Hearts and Hands Foundation for the ongoing building of new schools in the Uspantan region of Guatemala.



LGMS students Sara and Becca Frangos receiving recognition from the Mayor of Uspantan for LGMS's fundraising efforts.

**Christ +
The
Redeemer**
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Christ the Redeemer Catholic Schools provides Catholic education to students in traditional publicly funded schools in Canmore, Brooks, Drumheller, High River, Okotoks, Oyen and Strathmore and Online Schooling and Blended Programs to students all over Alberta and around the world through The Centre for Learning@Home.

We also bus students from Banff to our school in Canmore. To receive transportation grants from Alberta Education for these students, we are required to form Banff and Lake Louise. The Catholic electorate is invited to attend a

Formation Vote Night

June 8th, 2010

www.redeemer.ab.ca

For more information please contact

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Students say thank you to Devonian Properties for their generosity.