

Local Schools Support Earthquake Victims with Prayers, Money and More

SAN DIEGO — In varied and unique ways, Catholic elementary and high schools throughout the Diocese of San Diego have generously supported earthquake relief efforts in Haiti.

From the 18 schools that provided input for this article, more than \$25,500 has been collected and sent to Haiti through a number of relief organizations.

That amount does not take into account the donations that many of the diocese's other 34 schools and 99 parishes have made in response to the Jan. 12 magnitude 7 earthquake. As of Feb. 22, Catholic Relief Services alone had received \$615,065.97 from donors in the Diocese of San Diego.

All Hallows Academy and St. Columba, St. Didacus, St. Kieran and St. John (Encinitas) schools chose to make their donations through Catholic Relief Services, while International Relief Services accepted the donations of St. Augustine High School students.

Many schools sent their donations to a religious congregation or relief organization with a direct connection to the school. These included: the Religious of Jesus and Mary (St. Pius X School), the Missionaries of Charity (St. Jude Academy), the American Haitian Foundation (St. Michael School, Poway), Haitian Relief Connection (Holy Trinity) and Hands Together Cite Soleil (St. Didacus).

Several schools, including All Hallows Academy, held assemblies or prayer services. In response to the tragedy, many schools came up with their own innovative projects and activities.

For a week at St. Vincent de Paul School, students learned about Haiti and earthquakes and participated in various planned activities.

St. Pius X held a mission race to collect money for Haiti.

In addition to money, Sacred Heart Academy in Ocean Beach and the School of

the Madeleine also collected shoes. Sacred Heart collaborated with Sports Chalet in a project called "Soles for Souls."

St. Kieran School worked with an employee at B.E.S.T. Services, Inc., a company that will match the school's donations.

St. John School suggested that each family have a "virtual meal" for dinner one night. The school posted a recipe of rice and beans on its Web site, asking parents to use that recipe as their family dinner. The parents were then asked to estimate the cost of the dinner they otherwise would have had and to donate that money to the school's collection for Haiti.

St. Michael School in Poway also sold drawstring bags and gave the profits from the sale, along with other donations, to the American Haitian Foundation.

St. Didacus School sold origami frogs.

At Cathedral Catholic High School, a group of parents who own construction companies plan to assist in the rebuilding of a Haitian orphanage.

At Stella Maris Academy in La Jolla, a conversation among three fifth-graders resulted in a decision to hold a bake sale, the proceeds of which were sent to the American Red Cross. Camilla Zanetti, Hamilton Allport and Kristina Vu organized the sale and recruited a small group of fellow students to join their effort. Selling their own home-baked goods, the students raised \$518.86. Camilla donated an additional \$70 she had requested in lieu of birthday presents.

"Whether a non-uniform day, art project, 'virtual meal,' prayer service, dollars or materials collected, Catholic schools understand the meaning and significance of outreach," said Michael Durant, principal of All Hallows Academy. "They take it seriously and are planting seeds for their students that become those dividends for life."

The Southern Cross