

# Grade-School Students' Generosity Inspires Parish

POWAY — Two grade-school students are inspiring their fellow parishioners at St. Michael Parish in Poway, thanks to their generous response to the devastating earthquake in Haiti.

Emily McCalligett, a second-grader, asked her birthday party guests to bring cash donations instead of presents. She was able to raise \$140 and gave it all to the American Haitian Foundation (AHF), a nonprofit organization that educates youth in Haiti.

"We are just so proud of our daughter," said Emily's parents, Sara Lowdermilk and Brian McCalligett.

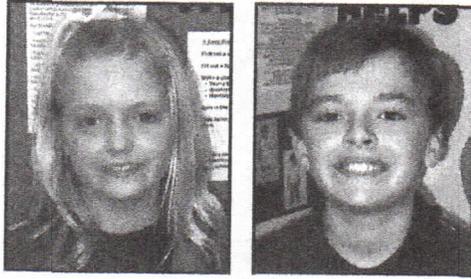
Fifth-grader Nicholas Handy, deciding he would work for the money he donated, went door-to-door selling locally grown oranges.

"I wanted to help out the children," Nicholas said with a smile.

The two children made their donations during a "sponsorship fair" held Feb. 6-7 at St. Michael Parish.

Melinda McGarvey, organizer of the annual event, said she was "astounded by the selflessness of Emily and Nicholas."

"My heart leapt when they told me



their stories," she said. "We all have a lot to learn from these two children."

The purpose of the scholarship fair was to offer financial assistance to students at St. Antoine-St. Augustine School in Petite-Riviere-de-Nippes, a village located 70 miles west of the capital city of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The three-story school, which was built 11 years ago by AHF, is still standing after the magnitude 7 earthquake that struck Jan. 12. The school educates more than 800 students from kindergarten through 12th grade.

The cost of educating one child at the school is about \$180 a year, which is only 50 cents a day. This includes tuition, classroom supplies and a school uniform, as well as one hot meal each day. On some days, this meal is the only one the student will receive.

Since the recent earthquake, AHF has been wiring additional donations directly to the school. These donations are being used to set up feeding stations to assist the vast number of people in the surrounding community who were affected by the earthquake.

At the scholarship fair, parishioners had the opportunity to put a human face to the Haitian students, learning their names and seeing their photos. The goal was to transform a donation process into more of a personal relationship.

Thanks to the sponsorship fair, many parish families have signed up to support two or three Haitian children. As a result, more than 170 students at St. Antoine-St. Augustine School have already found sponsors.

Sponsorships can be paid monthly (\$15 per child), quarterly (\$45 per child) or annually (\$180 per child). Tax-deductible donations can be mailed directly to AHF or made online at the foundation's Web site.

For more information, visit [www.american-haitianfoundation.org](http://www.american-haitianfoundation.org).

*The Southern Cross*