

Community Service

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Head of Middle School

For this month's News from the Head, I wanted to turn the focus to some of the outstanding co-curricular programs taking place in the Middle School. Community service has been a long-standing commitment by the Middle School. This year, we've had a particular focus on turning community service events into service learning opportunities. Speaking towards that dynamic, Reverend Bert Bibens and Mrs. Cassandra Timko, Student Leadership Sponsor, offer their perspectives.

Service: Prepping our students for Life

One of our goals, at Holland Hall, is to instill in each student the notion that community service isn't just something you do to earn acclaim in the local news media, or to satisfy some requirement that the school has imposed. Instead, community service is about helping people. Plain and simple.

As people of faith, we are compelled by a loving, caring God to reach out to those less fortunate than ourselves...offering a "hand up", as opposed to a handout. All of us on this planet need other people. We might need someone when our hearts are broken, or when our successes suddenly turn to failure, or when our dreams and hopes are shattered. Admittedly, we are often reaching out to those who are less fortunate in terms of their socio-economic status, but we are offering a hand to real people, with real problems, and with a real dependence upon the compassion and generosity of communities like ours, to help them solve the crises that envelope their lives.

Students and families donating canned goods and diapers and Christmas gifts are a terrific place to start. But, the truly wonderful moments in community service are found, when members of the Holland Hall family come face to face with the recipients of our care. Not so that we can hear the words "thank-you" or "bless you", but so that we can see the situations, and hear the voices of those who are struggling. It is easier to imagine a mile in those shoes, when confronted with that real person, eye to eye. One's own blessings are never more evident, than when we see what life looks like on the flip side. And, more important, the need is seen much more clearly, when witnessed firsthand.

While we are a college prep school, we are also a "life prep" school, and this is hopefully one of those areas of growth, that will open the hearts and the minds of tomorrow's leaders, as they shape their impressions of the world. Please support us, as we attempt to broaden each student's perspective, by continuing to reach out through these service-learning opportunities.

-- The Rev. Robert L. Bibens
Primary & Middle School Chaplain

Student Leadership's Commitment to Service-Learning

The Middle School Student Leadership has recently been involved in several service-learning projects this year. In January, the Middle School donated 8,607 diapers and 54 pairs of jeans to Emergency Infant Services. Prior to the drive, EIS Director, Eileen Bradshaw, spoke to the entire student body about the services they provide and the needs of the families they serve. In March, we will take Student Leadership students to EIS to help with organizing supplies that are given to families in need.

On Saturday, February 14 about 15 students and several parents meet at Iron Gate where we were able to serve food and pass out Valentine Sacks. This was an amazing experience for everyone who helped out. Iron Gate feeds hundreds of homeless people daily. Anyone can walk in to their facility and will immediately be greeted by the Manager, Ernest. Several of the students made comments that the thing that surprised them the most was that Iron Gate is such a happy and friendly place. We will definitely be going back.

Every February the Middle School participates in the Food For Families Food Drive. This year is no exception. The students in Leadership set their goal at raising 3500 pounds of food. If every student in the middle school will bring in 10 pounds of food we will easily reach this goal. On Saturday, February 28 Student Leadership will be working at the Food Bank from 9-12. The students in Leadership are very active in looking for different organizations locally, nationally, and internationally where we can make a difference either by sending money from our soda sales or donating our time.

We welcome any middle school student to attend our Monday morning meetings at 7:30. For more information check out our website:

http://fas.hollandhall.org/~ctimko/Site_2/Welcome.html.