

Candy, soda sales sweeten cash haul for hurricane relief

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Elizabeth Jakob, left, laughs at a comment from Grayson Johnston, second from right, as they and fellow students Alli Rhoads, second from left, and Sebastian Neeley show one of the ways they raised money for Goodson Middle School relief. They went room to room selling candy, pencils and other items. They also are selling punch cards to Whaley’s East End Drug for fountain sodas.

Jefferson City area schools’ hurricane relief efforts have continued, even as this year’s destructive Atlantic Ocean hurricane season has, too — with Hurricane Nate threatening New Orleans and nearby areas of the Gulf Coast this weekend, likely as a Category 1 hurricane.

Nate was expected to make landfall Saturday night in the mainland United States, which as CNN reports, would make it the third hurricane to do so in six weeks, after Harvey and Irma.

As of Friday, local schools have collectively raised approximately \$11,600 for hurricane relief in the aftermath of Harvey and Irma, plus Maria after it walloped Puerto Rico.

Lewis and Clark Middle School Principal Sherri Thomas said Friday her school has raised more than \$2,000 and won’t be done until after parent-teacher conferences scheduled in the last full week of this month.

Lewis and Clark adopted Goodson Middle School in Cypress, Texas, after Harvey. Students, faculty and staff wrote letters of support to the Goodson community, and Goodson will be the recipient of their monetary aid, too.

Thomas shared a thank-you note from Goodson’s Principal Sheri McCaig: “I can’t begin to explain what our adoption by your school has meant to me. The personal letters are overwhelming. What an incredible show of support and love for your fellow educator! We feel so blessed to be connected with such a caring school. I personally feel

fortunate that you found me. Thank you, from one principal to another, for your amazing kindness. I hope to be able to pay it forward!”

Goodson Middle School itself was not inundated with floodwater — though the building did sustain some damage from leaks in its roof and around doors — but dozens of its students and staff were flooded out of their homes.

Of Lewis and Clark’s fundraising total for Goodson, \$1,324 and counting is from Team Quest, addressed to Goodson on a mock check “for new beginnings.” Jefferson City Public Schools’ middle school students are divided into collaborative “teams” within their grade levels.

The eighth-grade Team Quest is led by teachers Erin Zeilman, Jaime Schulte, Trudy Lakes and Joy Johnson.

The students they advise have done fundraising activities ranging from selling candy, gum and pencils via carts classroom to classroom to musical performances in school. Krieger & Krieger Accountants donated \$100. Much of the funds this group of students has raised has come through the candy sales and selling \$5 punch cards sponsored by Whaley’s Pharmacy.

The cards entitle holders to 10 large cherry or vanilla sodas from Whaley’s, with all proceeds from the card sales going to Goodson. Whaley’s Office Administrator Ryan Drewel’s daughter is in Johnson’s class. People interested in purchasing a card can contact Lewis and Clark’s front office.

“I think we raised the bar pretty high on this one,” Johnson said of Team Quest’s fundraising lead.

“It’s good to know that we’re helping a lot of people,” student Sebastian Neeley said. “I think if we were put in that position, we would want people to do this for us, too.”

Lakes lived in Jackson, Mississippi, when Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast 12 years ago, and she shared her experiences with students to spur them to action as Harvey approached.

She talked about “how a lot of people lost everything, including family, talked about how some people lost family members while they were holding them, and then the aftermath.”

She shared with students what it’s like to live through the realities of not having power or services for extended lengths of time, beyond just the crisp statistics shared through national news. “Especially when you’re in the South, in August, that’s the hottest month of the year. Now you’re dealing with all these other situations, and on top of that, you have no heating and cooling, so you have this extreme heat, you have limited water supply, your food is spoiling and you’re just in survival mode.”

Her family didn’t have power for a week after Katrina, and in the grueling meantime, her mother — a registered nurse — was able to manually provide dialysis for Lakes’ grandmother. Even so, after a week without full-quality treatment, Lakes said the decline in people’s health was noticeable.

“That kind of struck a nerve with (her students), especially after the Florida incident happened with the nursing home,” when a dozen patients died in the summer heat after losing air conditioning when Irma hit, she said. “That kind of gave them a new perspective of a storm hitting. These are things that you go through, but you really don’t think about when you’re not in that situation.”

“I didn’t really know how serious hurricanes were, and then whenever we heard that story, it showed me that it’s a big deal and we need to do something about it,” Neeley said.

“I’d want to know how that’s helped them, like how it’s made their situation that much better,” student Grayson Johnston said.

“And that could possibly inspire other people to start doing this, too,” Neeley added. Other recent hurricane relief efforts from local schools include:

- Calvary Lutheran High School reported Friday it had raised \$338 through chapel collections.

- During homecoming week, Helias High School raised \$230, including through the sale of Chick-fil-A breakfast sandwiches.

- St. Joseph Cathedral School announced this week its Student Council is adopting St. John Paul II Catholic School in Houston, Texas. Students can pay \$1 in support of hurricane relief Thursday to dress down.

A Sept. 14 online update from John Paul’s Principal Rebecca Bogard said about 50 of the school’s families had been affected by Harvey, and that weekend alone, there were five or six homes that needed volunteer work crews to do demolition and clean-out work.