

Hurricanes bring flood of donations from local schools

- News Tribune eReader

- 17 Sep 2017

- By Phillip Sitter phillip@newstribune.com

Local schools have collectively raised at least \$9,100 for relief after hurricanes Harvey and Irma, and more fundraisers are ongoing or planned for the next several weeks.

Much of the money will benefit schools in Texas, Louisiana and Florida.

Immaculate Conception and St. Peter Interparish elementary schools have raised money for the National Catholic Educational Association's "Student to Student: A Catholic School Response for Hurricane Relief 2017" campaign.

The effort launched Sept. 1 in the wake of Harvey and has expanded to support Catholic school communities affected by Irma. The NCEA said 100 percent of collected funds will go to dioceses in affected areas for their school communities.

Immaculate Conception raised \$3,119.50 in three days last week for the NCEA's campaign. Principal Heather Schrimpf said technically this was in just 45 minutes — 15 minutes each morning in a penny war.

"This year is the most we've ever done," Schrimpf said, adding the school has done annual penny wars for years to support local causes and other national and international ones, too, like relief after the 2011 Joplin tornado and to support a priest building a well in Nigeria.

St. Peter Principal Gayle Trachsel reported her school raised \$1,200 Friday through a \$1-or-more dress down day.

Belair Elementary School announced Monday it had raised \$302.29 in a coin drive the week before. Principal Elizabeth Milhollin previously told the News Tribune she hopes to donate the money to a school in the Houston Independent School District.

One of Houston ISD's schools, James C. Mitchell Elementary, has been adopted by Blair Oaks Elementary School and now the high school, too.

Blair Oaks Elementary Principal Kimberley Rodriguez said the last update she had received was Sept. 9 from Mitchell's counselor. Mitchell teachers are creating a list of needs.

It's probably taking time to tabulate because everything in the school was a total loss due to floodwater.

"We are starting with basic supplies to get started," Rodriguez said. She added students are also selling "Choose Kind" shirts; all proceeds from those sales will go to support Mitchell.

Blair Oaks High School's "Impact" student group of seniors raised \$402 last weekend at a tailgate before the Friday night football game, which Principal Melinda Aholt said will support Mitchell.

In addition to that and other forthcoming collections of supplies, the school is hoping to host a book drive for Mitchell, Aholt said.

The Jefferson City Public Schools' districtwide book drive earlier this month collected 128 boxes of books in total, Melanie Thompson said. Thompson is the librarian at Thorpe Gordon Elementary School, and she coordinated the book drive.

She added the 128 boxes include 25 already taken to Royalwood Elementary School in Texas by former JCPS Board of Education member Joy Sweeney.

Cedar Hill Elementary School and Pioneer Trail Elementary School have respectively raised \$300 and \$460 for the Red Cross. Pioneer Trail's "Gray Wolves Have Heart" fundraising campaign ended Friday.

Helias High School raised \$1,952.30 for Catholic Charities USA.

Trinity Lutheran School's Principal Steve Gonzales said a collection at chapel offering Aug. 30 garnered \$1,375.62 for Lutheran World Relief.

Ongoing and upcoming hurricane relief efforts by local schools include:

- Calvary Lutheran High School students and faculty are collecting money through Wednesday for LCMS Disaster Response.

- Thomas Jefferson Middle School students will be raising money for the Austin Pets Alive animal shelter in Austin, Texas, which has taken in thousands of pets after Harvey.

- Lewis and Clark Middle School will be raising money for Goodson Middle School in Texas.

- Blair Oaks Middle School is letting attendees at the home volleyball game Monday bring three school supplies like new, unopened notebooks and packs of pens, pencils, markers and crayons in lieu of the \$2 admission charge.

- St. Joseph Cathedral School is organizing a \$1-or-more dress down day for Oct. 12.

The Associated Press reported Thursday that local and national charities have raised more than \$350 million in the three weeks since Hurricane Harvey.

At least \$211 million has gone to the Red Cross; more than \$50 million to a local fund set up by Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner and Harris County Judge and chief administrative official Ed Emmett; and \$30 million to the foundation of Houston Texans star JJ Watt.