

## Published April 13th, 2011 OIS Students Take Action Locally, Globally Cathy Dausman



7th graders at Orinda Intermediate School, Millie Kirchberg (left) and Isabelle Sato are involved in their science class' Take Action Program this semester. Photo C. Dausman

they will remember from 7th grade science."

Millie Kirchberg and Isabelle Sato know they are privileged to live in Orinda. But they are developing compassion for the less fortunate worldwide through a science program at their school. They explain in a letter they wrote to Lamorinda Weekly:

"We are 7th grade students at Orinda Intermediate School and are working on a "Take Action Project" for our science class. Each student has chosen a problem that they feel strongly about and have spent the past month researching and organizing ideas to raise awareness."

"It's about the process," says teacher and Science Department Chair Sue Boudreau. "It's the social aspect of kids working with friends." Boudreau developed the Take Action Project (TAP) curriculum at OIS three years ago and wants it to be "fun and imaginative" for her students. To date, some 900 students have participated in the project.

Boudreau says she was inspired to develop a curriculum "to empower, educate and inspire young people" after learning the dire predictions of climate change in the next 100 years. Fellow science teachers Karen Snelson and Kim Campbell-White ensure that each 7th grader experiences TAP. According to Boudreau, a year-end online student survey consistently ranks TAP "the number one thing

Educators from Australia, Hong Kong and Canada have inquired about the TAP program. Boudreau has made curriculum presentations at St. Mary's College and to National Science Teachers Association conferences in Phoenix and San Francisco. Her project information was also published in the October 10, 2010 edition of NSTA "Science Scope" magazine. Those who use the project are very encouraging. One Washington science teacher writes: "my students and I are LOVING the take action project."

Millie and Isabelle's letter continues:

"Our focus concerns the unsanitary water conditions affecting millions of people in Haiti. After much thoughtful research and an interview with a Lawrence Berkeley Lab specialist, we have decided to fundraise for the non-profit organization, Global Giving, in support of clean water in Haiti."

The girls expect to raise \$300, \$1,000 or \$5,000, depending on which student is talking. Boudreau says most students raise very little money, although a TAP project to benefit Lou Gehrig's disease (ALS) two years ago netted \$33,000. But students are not graded on how much they raise. TAP teaches them to think ahead and work with a partner, "skills and attitudes that will help them later in life," says Boudreau.

"To raise money, we are doing a walk-a-thon on Saturday, April 23, 2011 at the Lafayette Reservoir starting at 10:00 AM."

Millie and Isabelle will walk six miles for pledges, wearing tee shirts they'll design. They showed a video they created themselves, "Dirty Drinking Water," in class.

Global Giving is just one example of many charities students have selected, and there are many other fundraising events. Campbell-White says past TAP students have held bake sales, swim-a-thons, setup lemonade stands, volunteered at shelters and soup kitchens, animal rescue programs; beach clean ups, tree plantings, written letters to government entities, and held a dance fundraiser. TAP projects from Campbell-White's classes include work for Save the Bay Campaign, Susan G Komen for the Cure, UNICEF, World Health Organization, Cool California, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, World Wildlife Fund, Food 4 Africa, Amazon Watch, and The Hunger Project, among many others.

Boudreau is Isabelle's teacher; Campbell-White teaches Millie, whose older brother completed TAP two years ago. Because of that "she's always asking questions," says Campbell-White. "As teachers, we love to see students gain interest in current events, relevant topics, and science. We like to give the students a lot of choice in the classroom creating a sense of ownership and practicing decision-making skills."

The girls, along with their classmates, are already learning valuable lessons. "I wish I could make more money [for a cause] and work less," says Isabelle. As for Millie, she's learned what charitable fundraisers everywhere know: that "money doesn't grow on trees." file:///C|/Documents%20and%20Settings/Andy/My%20...f/OIS-Students-Take-Action-Locally-Globally.html (1 of 2) [4/12/2011 8:27:33 AM]

Donations to Global Giving can be sent care of Orinda Intermediate School, 80 Ivy Drive, Orinda, CA 94563. Mark the envelope: attn: Kim Campbell-White and Sue Boudreau.

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