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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."

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."

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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