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Students step up to help Haitians

Moeller High helps ensure clean water

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Moeller High School students watched in awe Friday as they witnessed a demonstration of how their efforts to help Haiti will materialize.

One of their initiatives is to donate money to buy packets of Pur, a Procter & Gamble product that purifies water. Over their lunch hour, students saw a demonstration of how dirty water is turned into clear, potable water in less than a half hour.

"The good thing about this is you literally know you're saving lives," said Maurice Williams, a retired P&G employee who is now a Moeller English teacher.

The Catholic boys' school in Kenwood is just one of dozens of schools across the region that continue to step up to help Haiti recover from a devastating earthquake.

Moeller students paid \$2 on "Grub Day" to be out of uniform Friday. The money goes toward purchasing Pur packets for Haiti. A total of \$3,111.50 was donated during the day. Money was also collected at Friday night's basketball game.

Mike Moroski, an English teacher and one of the organizers of Moeller's Haiti projects, said he's never seen so many students out of uniform for Grub Day fundraisers, which speaks to the specific cause they're supporting.

"I've seen it affect them more than a lot of different disasters that I've witnessed in the nine years I've been teaching because of the scale and how tragic it is," Moroski said of the earthquake.

It's not unusual for Moeller students to respond when disaster strikes, but there is something different about Haiti.

"I thought this case was a little bit more difficult, because it's so urgent and pressing. We have to get everything in the works within a week, because people are dying by the hour," said Justin Liggett, a 16-year-old junior. "It's great to know that every dollar we raise could be, potentially, a life saver."

To demonstrate how Pur works, Williams called upon his P&G connections and enlisted the help of Samantha Sakemiller, a P&G employee and volunteer for the company's nonprofit charity, Children's Safe Drinking Water.

"I think what's really neat about the 'Water for Haiti' program they're doing is they're giving kids lots of ways to get involved," Sakemiller said of Moeller. "It's a really good way to see, 'I can make a difference.' I think, with Haiti, people feel like 'I can send money,' but how does that make a difference?"

Moeller students also are trying to amass 1,000 cases of water this week and next to donate to Haiti relief.



The Enquirer/Ernest Coleman

Samantha Sakemiller shows Moeller students how Pur works to clean up muddy water as part of a school fundraiser for Haiti.

Additional Facts

Haiti relief school events

Here's a sample of what area schools are doing to help Haiti:

- St. Ursula Academy in East Walnut Hills will donate missions money that it collects from students in homerooms through Feb. 16 to fund rescue efforts.
- At Roger Bacon High in St. Bernard, the French Club and Community Outreach students sold desserts at lunch Thursday to raise funds, and will create posters about the country and the earthquake. Announcements about Haiti will be read each morning on the PA system. Monetary donations were collected at a Jan. 17 mixer for seventh- and eighth-grade students. Students who donated \$1 Thursday could dress in red and blue, the colors of the Haitian flag. All funds go to Catholic Relief Services.
- Purcell Marian held a collection during lunches Friday, and profits from regular Friday pizza sales went to Haiti. Money collected will be donated to Catholic Relief Services. The school holds a food and water, toiletries and clothing drive over the next four weeks, with the items going to Matthew 25 Ministries. On a date to be determined, students can buy a ribbon made with Haiti's flag colors for \$2 and can come to school out of uniform.
- In West Clermont Schools, Amelia High School senior Emily Clyburn is organizing a districtwide relief drive. Lists of needed items have been assigned to different schools and will be delivered to Matthew 25 Ministries. The drive ends Feb. 3.
- McNicholas High in Mount Washington will donate half of its Penny Day collection Feb. 5 to Catholic Relief Services for Haiti. The rest will continue to fund Catholic education for local needy families.

- St. John the Baptist School, on Dry Ridge in Colerain Township, is collecting nonperishable food and cleaning supplies for Matthew 25 Ministries through Monday. Students decorated a cafeteria wall with colored hearts to form a rainbow and wrote on the hearts their prayers and hopes for Haiti.
- In the Diocese of Covington, student council representatives from eight of the nine high schools met Tuesday at Villa Madonna Academy to discuss what they could do in a unified effort to raise money for the people in Haiti. Ideas being considered are a penny war during Catholic Schools Week, a Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption in Covington, and a dance. Details will be finalized in coming days.

Denise Smith Amos and William Croyle contributed to this story.