

ROBERT TREAT ACADEMY STUDENTS RAISE MONEY FOR HAITIAN EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS

By Heather Brookhart

The student council at Robert Treat Academy will donate the proceeds of their annual fundraiser to help the victims of the earthquake that struck Haiti.

Students at the K-8 Newark charter school will sell handmade chocolate hearts lollipops as Valentine grams for \$1 each. They are hoping to produce and sell anywhere between 500 and 1,000 lollipops for this year's fundraiser.

"We wanted to find a cause to donate the money to, or at least a portion of the money to, this year," said Physical Education teacher Paul Parada, who is also the student council advisor. "The student council met two days after the earthquake struck, and the students actually came up with the idea to aid the relief efforts."

Members of the student council have been coming to school an hour early to make the chocolate lollipops. Parada and social studies teacher John Golombuski supervise students as they melt chocolate and pour it into heart-shaped molds.

"The upperclassmen -the seventh and the eighth graders - and the sixth graders, they keep aware of current events," Golombuski said. "We've been discussing them in class and student council, and they're very interested to know what they could do."

The profit from the fundraiser will go to the American Red Cross. Parada said the chocolate fundraiser started two years ago and last year they raised \$800. The money was donated to a college fund established for the children of a former faculty member who died of cancer.

Science teacher Christine Kelley-Kemple is heading up another fundraising effort at the school titled, "Raising Change for Haiti." The event will be a

"Penny Wars" competition where the school is split into three groups and students compete against one another to raise the most money in pennies.

"We're hoping to generate a lot of enthusiasm and knowledge about what's going on in Haiti in an appropriate way," Kelley-Kemple said.

She said the faculty rarely ever asks students to bring in money for multiple reasons, but they thought bringing in pennies would be an easy way to get the students involved.

Kelley-Kemple said students must complete 50 hours of community service to graduate and each grade level participates in different acts of philanthropy. The community service requirement has been part of the curriculum at Robert Treat Academy since it was founded in 1997 by The North Ward Center.

During morning announcements on Thursday, Jan. 28, Kelley-Kemple gave a Powerpoint presentation to explain the game to the children. Student council members will man the "Penny War" stations in the morning at the front hall, and teachers will be in charge during lunch. The contest will be held for one week, and every two days students will be informed of their fundraising progress.

Adrienne Davis, vice president of the Robert Treat Academy Board of Trustees, praised the students for showing an outpouring of concern for the situation in Haiti.

"By holding this fundraiser, students are not only helping the victims of the Haitian earthquake, but are learning about another country and some of the problems people in those countries face," Davis said. "We pride ourselves in making sure our students have a broader understanding of the world around them. That is the hallmark of a good education."