



A Polk County Public Charter School

Press Release

Lakeland Montessori Middle School Students Vote to Cancel End of Year Trip,

Vote to Send Money Earned from School Business Project to Relief Efforts in Nepal Instead.

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Lakeland Montessori Middle School (LMMS) students have decided to donate money they raised for an end-of-the-year trip to help Nepalese families recover from the earthquake that occurred on April 25, 2015.

After learning about the earthquake in class, several students suggested a school fundraising effort. During a student-led whole school meeting, the students voted to cancel their planned end of year canoeing and swimming trip to Weeki Wachi State Park and instead send the \$2200 they raised to Mercy Corps to aid in relief efforts. They also planned a “loose change” campaign to raise additional relief money. They hope to collect enough pennies to line the sidewalk all the way around Lake Morton. The math classes estimate that it will take about \$800 in pennies to line the sidewalk around Lake Morton.

“The students raised the money for this trip out of their own student business; so they get to decide how they spend it,” said Heather Manrow, the school principal.

“It wouldn’t be any fun going, knowing that families are separated and we could have helped,” said Gryphon Eyer, a seventh grader at LMMS.

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“This is for their benefit, not ours, “ said Kye Patsue, another 7th grader.

People interested in contributing to the LMMS loose change campaign can “adopt a vase,” fill it with change, and return the vase before May 20th.

“The idea of doing something selfless for other people took hold and students identified with that,” said teacher Kelly De La Cruz. “I’m so proud of them, doing something like this will live in their hearts forever.” The students aimed for a consensus beyond a majority vote. “It would be no fun in 51% wanted to go and 49% wanted to stay,” said 8th grader, Kaitlyn Howe, “we talked about ways we could compromise between the groups that wanted to spend money in different ways and came up with something everyone could agree on.”

Lakeland Montessori Middle School provides students with a holistic, developmentally responsive Montessori environment which allows for individual expression and encourages growth into active, responsible participants in society. Student-led businesses and Service Learning is an integral part of authentic learning in a Montessori classroom. In service learning, students learn through their engagement in community service planning, action, reflection and demonstration. Students choose the projects in which they engage and share their results with the community. Service Learning allows adolescents to learn and develop skills that will make them better citizens in a local and global community.