

The Learning Curve

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Your weekly guide to students, schools, teachers and triumphs in Bibb County's Public Schools

Bibb County Public School students and staff reach out to the victims of Hurricane Katrina

From Northeast High School's one hour collection of \$1,100 to item donations to sending cards to helping out a family whose child is now enrolled in the school, the students and faculty have shown an amazing show of generosity and community-mindedness in reaching out to the victims of the hurricanes along the Gulf Coast and here in Middle Georgia.

Following is an overview (but by no means an all-inclusive list) of some of the things the students of Bibb County Public Schools are doing to help, many of them ideas by the students themselves.

No one has said it better than Vineville Academy Creative Expressions teacher Victoria Wright: "What you'll find out from all the schools is that children, by nature, are breathtakingly generous. I couldn't tell you the number of kids that brought in their own precious toys, not old discarded ones, but new and adored ones. I can't tell you the number of children that tried to tape their lunch money to their letters, that brought in their piggy bank savings they've collected since June, that tried to write their phone numbers on the cards so they could personally extend a hand. Children are amazing, and more often than not, it's them that inspire me, not the other way around."

Jones Elementary

They have set up a drop point for personal items to be donated as well as a collection site for anyone wishing to donate money.

Heard Elementary



The first full truckload of supplies Heard students gathered for delivery to the Gulf Coast.

Money and items are constantly flowing into the school here as well. One student held a lemonade stand over a weekend and turned in all of her \$41, and one family donated \$200.

They have already packed an SUV full of food and supplies to deliver to the Gulf Coast, with more boxes already filling up inside the school. "When I say full, I mean to the roof, to the windows, to the doors - FULL!" says 2nd grade teacher Stefanie Darity. "I am so proud of all that we have done, and I hope that it gives someone or some family help and hope."

Heritage Elementary

The school saw new students being enrolled in the days after the tragedy, and "we immediately made sure that they had school supplies," says Counselor Deborah Eidam, adding that they wanted to provide even more items. Flyers were sent home with the students and donations began coming in immediately.

A first grader is championing the "Dimes for Disaster" drive and is challenging other classes to collect their dimes to donate to the victims. One of the school's lunchroom workers found out the mother of the new families in the school had experience working in a law firm, and, through her cousin who is an attorney, was able to arrange a job for her.

Taylor Elementary

A fourth grader and her mother wanted to organize a donation drive, so they made posters advertising the days. They spent time in the car pool lines collecting money to be donated to the Red Cross.

According to Principal Susan Simpson, they are expecting even more students to begin enrolling and says they will be welcomed with open arms.

Skyview Elementary

On the advice of the Red Cross, the school will focus its contributions on collecting money. Each student will turn money in to their teachers, and parents are asked to make any checks payable to the Red Cross.

On the local level, a staff member has donated a 3-bedroom house to a family which has relocated to the Macon area, complete with a stove, oven, and refrigerator. Community members have already donated a bedroom and living room suite, but they still need twin beds, a dinette set, dressers, lamps, and other various furniture. To help furnish, they have assigned grade levels to certain items: pre-K, kindergarten, and 1st grade are asked to bring in kitchen items; 2nd and 3rd graders are bringing in towels, linens, and blankets; 4th graders are donating personal and toiletry items like soap, shampoo, deodorant, tissues, toothpaste, toothbrushes, etc.; 5th graders are being asked to bring in non-perishable food.

Vineville Academy

The Beta Club organized the school's relief effort, collecting nearly two truckloads of supplies for the evacuees staying at Rock Eagle. Not only did students bring in items, they all wrote personal letters (totaling nearly 1,000) to the victims, each filled with hope, compassion, and empathy.

"I'm sure the efforts of all children will make an uplifting, encouraging and passionate piece - one that displays the heart of American compassion," says Wright.

Appling Middle

The students at Appling prepared personal care packages to send to families, including suitcases, tote bags, pocketbooks, and shoes.

Once collected, they were given to the Reverend Ronald Terry of New Fellowship Baptist Church for delivery to Mississippi.

Howard Middle

Students here brought in one dollar a piece for the opportunity to wear their hats during the school day.

Miller Middle

"We are proud of the way students are giving," says Principal Tanzy Kilcrease.

A competition was started between the classes to see who could raise the most, and the students leapt at the challenge. When it was all counted, the student body donated more than \$1,800 to the Red Cross.

Rutland Middle

Students here are faced with the realities of the situation first-hand as they already have several students who fled the area attending their school. Many of their efforts have been focused on making sure they are properly taken care of and made to feel welcome in our community.

Students and faculty have brought in items they will need to make living here comfortable like furniture, dishes, pots, pans, and toiletries. Home School Facilitator Sue Lanthrip has taken the children shopping for clothes as well as organized the clothing donations being brought in by the community. Art teacher Kari Waltz is designing a t-shirt which will be sold to help raising money, and a local businessman has donated a trailer to help store and deliver the items.

"We are trying to do whatever is needed to help the families that have come to our community," says Principal Dr. Jerri Hall.

Northeast High

Students began their fundraising two days after Katrina struck New Orleans, and so far, they have raised more than \$1,500 to donate to the Red Cross.



Northeast students donate a check to the Red Cross for relief efforts locally and nationally.

Southwest High

Principal Dr. Gail Fowler feels a personal connection to victims who lost their houses to the flood since she herself lost her home in Macon's Flood of 1994. Knowing first-hand that feeling of loss and having the community reach out to her, she has made a personal donation and has been encouraging her students to donate items and money.

Westside and Central High

The Westside Student Council challenged Central to a Spirit Contest in honor of their recent football game. Both schools sold paper links in a spirit chain for 25 cents a piece, with all proceeds going to the victims. Between them, they raised almost than \$1,500.



Donated items from Alexander II students to be donated to the Red Cross.

Alexander II Elementary

"We are so fortunate for such a compassionate group of students, families, and staff members to demonstrate so much generosity in this community service project," says Counselor Lynda Singleton.

When students began asking what they could do to help, they decided to hold a collection drive which brought in money for the Red Cross and more than 1,000 items including: baby diapers (kindergartners), toothpaste and toothbrushes (1st grade), deodorant and tissues (2nd grade), cleaning wipes (3rd grade), hand sanitizer and bar soap (4th grade), shampoo and travel brushes (5th grade), and school supplies (6th grade).

Burghard Elementary

The Beta Club students decided on their own to pass around construction paper cut-outs of the letter "K," asking for donations for the victims.