

How do you volunteer?

"My experiences teaching in China and Nicaragua have increased my ability to see the world through the lenses of other cultures while augmenting my desire to help others no matter how far away geographically they might be."

rachel
furnish, 12

"I volunteer at Austin Pets Alive! with the shelter animals adoption because I'm a big animal person and when I'm older, I want to open my own animal shelter."

riely clark, 11

"I volunteer at Westbank Library shelving books and helping people find what they need. Reading has always been a passion of mine, and I love helping people do what I love."

jason
rosenberg, 10

"I'm part of National Charity League, in which I do community service with my mom as often as possible. In my time at National Charity League, I have completed over 200 hours of service."

hana
pearlson, 11

put in the hours

1 During fifth-period lunch on Oct. 16, juniors Madi Wright and Sophia Seaberg and sophomore Grace Moore sell T-shirts in the Chap Court to raise money for Agua for Managua. 2 Outside Westbank Library, juniors Juan De Haro and Hayley Bishop sit and chat on a bench De Haro had built for his Eagle Scout project.

3 At Interact's Coats for Kids on Dec. 5, senior Hayden Murphy and junior Kennedy Abney sort coats. "I had such a fun time volunteering for Coats for Kids," Murphy said.



1. sarah guthrie 2. phil smith 3. casey simmons

agua for managua

Girls start charity to provide clean water

by Bleakney Bissett

Water. Something so simple, always available, yet crucial to our survival. But it was not always simple. In Managua, Nicaragua, drinking water could be gambling with death. However, if juniors Madi Goll, Hayley Redding, Grace Robertson, Elizabeth Brigham, Madison Harkins and Megan Rioux had their way, that would soon change.

"When we came to Nicaragua, our mission was simple: bring joy to the children," Goll said. "Play with them, teach them, love on them. That was what we came for. But when we got there, it turned into so much more. Water, a necessity of life, is endangering their health. Clean water is something we don't even have to think twice about."

The girls saw how difficult it was there. This extreme poverty touched the lives of everyone who lived there in a way that was unthinkable in the United States. They knew that 10 days of mission work wasn't enough and couldn't bring themselves to say goodbye to all of the people they'd helped and forget the deprivation they had witnessed. Something had to be done.

"Knowing that the children's circumstances weren't going to change when we left made us want to help them in any way possible," Robertson said. "Feeling grateful for the abundance we have in our community, we felt compelled to bless others with what we've been blessed with."

That was where Agua for Managua came into play. It was a charity that was started by the girls to implement a water purification system at the Eden Center School in Managua. They sold T-shirts at school and their church for \$12, all of which went directly to paying for the purification system.

"Once we got the T-shirts, things really took off," Redding said. "Fundraising has been so fun! How generous people are really amazes me. Being able to get the message out and having the opportunity to do this has been such a blessing."

The group knew they were really going to make a difference and couldn't have been more excited about the things they were doing. However, they also knew that they could still do more for this community so near to their hearts.

"It's not just about the water," Goll said. "After a few days of being in Managua and getting to know the kids, we realized these kids have gone through their lives without a proper education. Education is the foundation of our society, and without it, we can't succeed. So far, the Eden Center has only three small classrooms. Our organization is trying to raise money to help them build more classrooms, a playground and a library."

The girls said they believed it was their responsibility and duty to serve the people of Managua and do everything they could to improve their quality of life. Though they knew they might never be able to help the people as much as they wished they could, they felt some satisfaction that at least they were doing something.

"I feel like people hear about barren countries and say to themselves, 'Oh, that's so sad,'" Goll said. "But we get distracted by our own lives. We ignore it because we don't see it. Seeing something like it in person and building relationships with people who have nothing to their name — it makes you want to make a difference. That's all we're trying to do — make a difference."



casey simmons



sarah guthrie

books of knowledge

Seniors Jeff Ott and Blanche ter Hofstede gather books for The Nobility Project, an organization that reaches out to students in Kenya to provide them with the tools they need to further their education.

feed the homeless

On Feb. 16, senior Christina Rosendahl prepares food for the homeless at University United Methodist Church with the Interact Club. Members of the club received service hours for helping.



mackenzie franklin

interact for kids

Club helps out Coats for Kids



casey simmons

ali franklin, 12

"Coats for Kids was a great way for students involved in the Interact Club to reach out and help others in our community stay warm during the winter."



casey simmons

josh willis, 12

"It was a great opportunity to do something great for the young children in need in our community."



casey simmons

carolyn devers, 10

"Coats for Kids was such a great experience because the staff was so friendly and I got to hang out with my friends and help the community at the same time."



casey simmons

kennedy abney, 11

"It was a fun experience to do with my friends, and I was glad that kids could have coats during the winter."