

IDS Middle School Provides Community Service At A Dozen Organizations

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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

-Margaret Mead, anthropologist

Community causes became the classroom for middle schoolers at Independent Day School - Corbett Campus. Students volunteered at 12 different sites throughout the Tampa Bay area on Oct. 14th as part of the bi-annual Middle School Community Service Day.

Students spent time with seniors by painting their nails or playing . They helped mentally challenged children ride horses. Still others got a little crafty in the kitchen with some baking and card making. All these differing activities had one thing in common - they were examples of how small acts of volunteerism can have big impacts.

Each community service day activity was completed by a multi-age advisory group, which meets once a week. These middle school students meet to discuss current events, collaborate with their peers in different grade levels, and most importantly, to give back to their community twice a year.

Among the worthy causes this time were Achieve Tampa Bay, Alpha House of Tampa, Bakas Equestrian Center, Tampa Bay Watch, Head Start at MOSI, Meals on Wheels, North Tampa Head Start, Hillsborough County Children's Services, Ronald McDonald House, Westshore Senior Center, Metropolitan Ministries, and My Last Tour: School Supplies for Afghan Children.



IDS Middle School Community Service Day-Alpha House
Front row, seated on floor (l to r): Cali Montalvo, Cassidy Brown, Kendall Graff
Back row (l to r): Colton Skalnik, Reagan Harrison, Caroline LeeFlang, Avi Baskin,
Casey Bauer, Carter Mook, Tylor, Kittredge, Josh Kartheiser

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Middle school teacher Amy Ragg's advisory students have volunteered for many years organizing the clothes closet and cleaning up the yard around Alpha House and students from an earlier visit noticed that this center for women lacked an adequate supply of books.

"My advisory students recognize that in our classrooms and library they have the luxury of a vast supply of fascinating reading material to appeal to any interest, so naturally, the kids decided to donate books and start a library. It was an amazing day!" said Mrs. Ragg.

The advisory group spent the morning assembling and stocking the shelves and left feeling proud for creating a library. Seventh grader Carter Mook, said, "I feel like we really made a difference today."

Other students volunteered at Hillsborough County Children's Services, a county department that offers residential and non-residential programs to dependent, abused or neglected children.

Middle School student Nirja Patel said the outreach at Children's Services was an eye-opening experience. "We looked around at the place where the children lived and saw how they live their daily lives. We decorated the cafeteria and gave them goodie bags. I felt really happy to help out children who are less fortunate than us," Patel said.

Student Kevin Banks, whose group put in sweat equity at the Ronald McDonald House, said he was happy to give the children and their families a chore-free day.

"We vacuumed, cleaned the balcony, sprayed disinfectant on furniture, and doorknobs. I felt good, because I helped families who needed the time to be with their children instead of worrying about taking care of their rooms," he said.

Other advisory groups stayed on campus to make a difference. One advisory utilized the school's kitchen to bake and personalize small goody bags for Meals on Wheels. In between their baking and packaging, they also created cards for soldiers overseas.

"The cards we are sending to the soldiers in Iraq had notes written about the weather, events in Florida, and words of encouragement for them," said middle school student Allegra Beachy.

Overall, students learned valuable lessons in community service while spending time with the families and children who benefited from their hard work.

Middle School student Josh Mayberry, who played chess and Uno with some residents at the Westshore Senior Center, was proud to sum up his day of doing. "I felt I did something good today for the community," he said.

Founded in 1968, Independent Day School-Corbett Campus is a fully accredited, independent school located on Orange Grove Drive in northwest Hillsborough County. The school serves students in PreK3 through 8th grade and offers the International Baccalaureate program of study for both elementary and middle school students (PYP and MYP). IDS-CC balances a nurturing learning environment with high standards and high expectations.

Read our book: ***It's All About Kids: Every Child Deserves A Teacher Of The Year***

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