

Tsunami Fndraiser

School Name: **Thomas W. Pyle Middle School**
Organization Name: **Pyle Middle School Student Government**
Advisor's Name: **Carrie Indenbaum and Jennifer Thorson**
of members in your group: **Six SGA officers, two teacher advisors**
of members participating in activity/project:
Technically, anyone who donated to our fundraiser participated in our project; i.e. the Pyle school and community—more than a thousand people, estimated.
Date(s) of activity/project: **January 3rd, 2005 thru January 7th, 2005**

I. Project Summary

Name of Project: **Pyle Middle School Tsunami Fundraiser**

After hearing about the terrible tsunami that did (and was doing) so much damage in Southeast Asia, our school SGA realized there had to be a way we could help. We decided to organize a school-wide fundraiser, and said we would match all donations up to \$500. We announced this at school Monday, and on Tuesday went around to TAG (Teacher Advisory Groups--a sort of "study hall") classes and collected donations. Students, teachers, parents and other members of the community gave very generously, and soon we had collected over a thousand dollars. We were astonished, having expected to receive no more than \$500 or \$1000 in total, let alone on the first day. The donations kept coming in, and by doubling our funds on Friday alone, we were able to raise \$18,500, which we gave to CARE International, to use in assisting tsunami victims.

II. Project Objectives

When we started our fundraiser, our obvious goal was to send as much money as possible (\$500-\$1000, we expected) to victims of the tsunami in Southeast Asia. When we began, over 50,000 were reported dead from the tsunami, and the numbers kept getting higher as the days went by. We had luckily escaped harm from the tsunami, but others were not so fortunate, and it was apparent to us that if we had the resources, we should do all we could to help. We knew sending supplies or food would be difficult, so we decided that by collecting funds, we could then give whatever we collected to a reputable charity (CARE International, we later decided).

III. Project Activities

Since we began our project almost the minute we got back from winter break, there was no time for an SGA meeting. We wanted to do something as soon as possible, and so by scrambling around in the halls, speaking to each other individually and through our teacher advisors, we were able to plan out our fundraiser. However, each day during TAG we met in our advisor Ms. Indenbaum's classroom, to plan very briefly, update each other, sometimes count the collected donations, and then "move out" to collect the day's funds from each classroom. By splitting up, each SGA student officer collecting from a different

portion of the school, we were able to collect from the entire school in a space of twenty minutes or less. Our main resource was undoubtedly our school television show, viewed school-wide daily---by announcing first our fundraiser, and then our results, each day, the entire school knew about the fundraiser within a matter of minutes. A science teacher at our school, Mr. Martin, put together video clips about the tsunami that really affected all the students. After viewing that video on Thursday morning, students were so eager to help (after seeing the tragedies caused by the tsunami) that the donations more than doubled on Friday. We also sent out notices on "PyleNet", an email group most families in the Pyle community subscribe to.

IV. Leadership

In carrying out our project, our student officers demonstrated great leadership. As officers, we took turns going on our school news show to alert students to our fundraiser, and our collected donations. We encouraged our peers to donate, especially as we collected the funds from the TAG classrooms. Personally, I know that when I went into classrooms, I tried to persuade the students to donate, telling them that even their pocket change would help, and I know other officers did the same. Although it was, of course, wonderful, it was almost a problem when we realized the donations were coming in much faster, and in greater amounts, than we had first predicted. We had planned to match all donations up to \$500, which we could not continue to do as the donations reached \$1000, then over \$3000. With such large donations, the media became interested, yet our student leaders showed great maturity by always trying to keep the focus on the victims on the tsunami, and not our student government.

V. Project Results

After completing our fundraiser, we all felt we had more than achieved our goal—to send as much money as possible to victims of the tsunami in Southeast Asia. As stated above, we had expected to raise no more than \$1000 (at the most) and to raise \$18,500 was wonderful. A representative of CARE International came to our school to accept our donation personally, and he spoke for several minutes, telling us exactly how his organization would use our funds, and our SGA as a whole felt very proud. The Pyle student body as a whole was also very impressed and proud to have raised so much money. Many who had scorned student government before apologized, or were at least less contemptuous. Although school dances and SMOB elections are fun and important, \$18,500 for charity is no laughing matter.

Written by Lena Peck, 8th grade student and Pyle Middle School SGA President