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### Kids empty piggy banks for Haitian relief

By CHRIS DOUCETTE, TORONTO SUN

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The day after the impoverished island nation was rocked by a devastating quake six weeks ago, the 280 students at Fieldstone Day School, 2999 Dufferin St., decided to do their part.

Together, they raised \$1,100 through their Kids Helping Kids charity drive for Haiti.

Students were asked to chip in a loonie or twonie for "grub day," which enables kids to leave their school uniform at home, Sue Johnson, assistant head of the lower class at the Kindergarten to Grade 12 school, said Tuesday.

The very next day the kids brought in more than \$1,000 to support the relief efforts of GlobalMedic, a group of paramedics, police officers, firefighters and others who donate their skills wherever and whenever such disasters strike.

"Many of them brought in \$5 or \$10, some emptying their piggy banks to do so and others asking their parents to allow them to forgo birthday presents to help in Haiti," Johnson said.

"That was really cool," she added proudly.

Rahul Singh, GlobalMedic's executive director, stopped by the school Tuesday to thank the students and show them how their donations are saving lives.

With the youngsters crowded around him in the gymnasium, viewing a slide show of photos from Haiti, he explained how the funds raised were used to buy a portable water purification unit called a Trekker, which was donated to an orphanage in southwestern Port-au-Prince.

"These kids came together and raised some money and now, thanks to them, there are 314 kids at an orphanage who have clean water to drink," Singh said.

"And the 300 or so people who live on the street out front of the orphanage also have access to that water. That's all because of the kids at this school."

Singh was in Haiti immediately after the earthquake struck and headed back there Wednesday after visiting Fieldstone.

"It breaks your heart to see what's going on over there," he said. "It was a rough go those first few days."

Singh has responded to disasters around the world over the past decade, but Haiti is "the worst ever."

He said it's great to see youngsters, most of whom likely didn't even know where Haiti was just a couple of months ago, become "global citizens."

"I hope (this teaches them to) think about what others are going through because it's important," Singh said.

GlobalMedic's rapid response teams flew to the Dominican Republic after the quake and then trucked 10 tonnes of equipment into devastated Haiti.

They immediately set up two inflatable hospitals that have since treated an endless stream of patients from everything from massive trauma to the common cold.

GlobalMedic is also providing 40,000 litres daily of life-sustaining, clean water for drinking, cooking and bathing.

"I just can't imagine," student Angelica Dzeko, 10, said of the horrors that Haitians have endured.

"It's really amazing that everybody gave a little and we were able to make such a big difference in so many lives," schoolmate Tyler Farrell, 13, said.

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