

TAKING ACTION

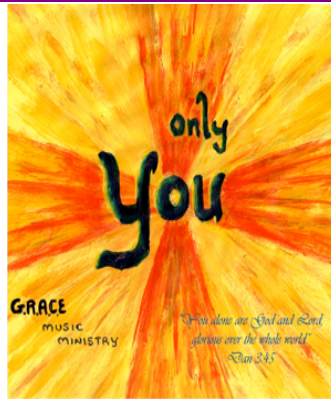
**ORGANISING A
FOOD DRIVE**



By: Allison Nelson-Ramah

Michael Joseph

Michelle Wyke-Thomas



Identifying and Researching our concern

G.R.A.C.E. is a dedicated team, comprising musicians and singers, who came together from various parishes to spread the Gospel through the medium of music. In October 2000 a few musicians from various parishes throughout the Archdiocese responded to simultaneous promptings from the Holy Spirit to form a new music ministry which became Glorious Rhythms Acclaiming Christ's Eternal-Love (G.R.A.C.E). Lead by a team of seven coordinators with Fr. Urban Hudlin as Spiritual Director, they accepted the commission to evangelise through our lives and our music.

This Ministry has embarked on several outreach programmes which are geared towards assisting the less fortunate and underprivileged in the society. One of the members of this ministry, Mr. Brendon Mitchell is also a past parent of Sacred Heart Girls' R.C.

Last Christmas, Brendon asked Allison to assist a family in need, by contributing food stuff, so that they could do hampers for them. She involved the students and parents of her Standard 3 class as well as a Standard 4 class. They had done in our Standard 3 Social Studies course of study, under Values and Attitudes, their responsibility as a citizen to show empathy and to care and share with others. The Standard 5 class of another group member also covered justice, fairness, rights and obligations in society as part of the Social Studies curriculum, so this was a perfect opportunity to put what our students learnt into practice.

Our Roytec Social Studies group had committed ourselves to a Take Action Plan which involved the investigation of noise pollution at the corner of Park and Charlotte Streets, where Rosary Boys' R.C. is located, and to involve our students in coming up with solutions to the problem. However, due to time constraints, and many challenges during the term, this project did not come off the ground.

We were not to be daunted, however, because, Brendon sent Allison an e-mail, requesting assistance for a Princes Town family of six (6) children, and three (3) adults whose house had burnt down. The father, was injured in the fire, and could not work, therefore they had no income and were in need of many items, the priority, of course, being food. This need would be an ongoing one, until the father was able 'to get on his feet.' The students and teachers brainstormed, and came up with the idea for a FOOD DRIVE.





Finding out who supports us

What do we live for if not to make life less difficult for each other?

- George Eliot

Giving kids clothes and food is one thing, but it's much more important to teach them that other people besides themselves are important and that the best thing they can do with their lives is to use them in the service of other people.

— Dolores Huerta

The quotes above inspired us to try to reach out to as many people as we could to help the family in need. Our schools already had a combined base of stakeholders who support any endeavours. The Principals and teachers are also a support base. We wanted to involve our parents in assisting to extend the support base, so we sent a letter to them, asking for the names of corporate citizens who they knew would be of assistance to our cause. Below is a copy of the letter sent out to parents asking for their assistance.

22nd March 2012.

Dear parents/guardians

We are asking your assistance in bringing relief to a Princes Town family of six (6) children and three (3) adults, who have lost their home in a fire. Our class is embarking on a food drive, as the sole breadwinner of the family, the father, was injured in the fire, and he is unable to work to provide for his family.

We are asking if you can assist by submitting to the class teacher by tomorrow, the name(s) of any corporate citizens/groceries, who would be able to assist us in donating dry goods or cash towards the needs of the family.

Thank you for your much needed assistance.

Respectfully

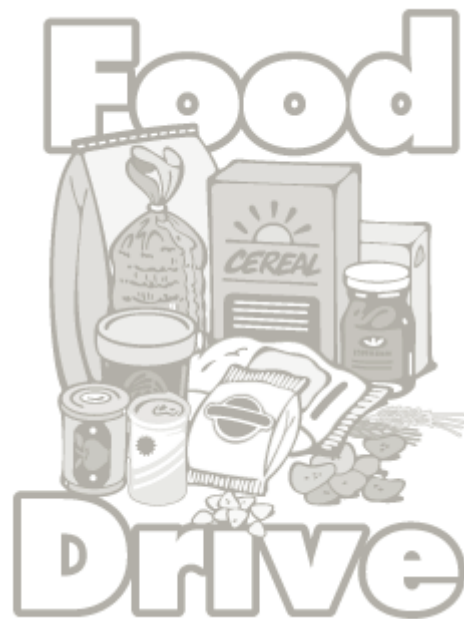
CLASS TEACHER



Create a plan

Our plan was as follows:

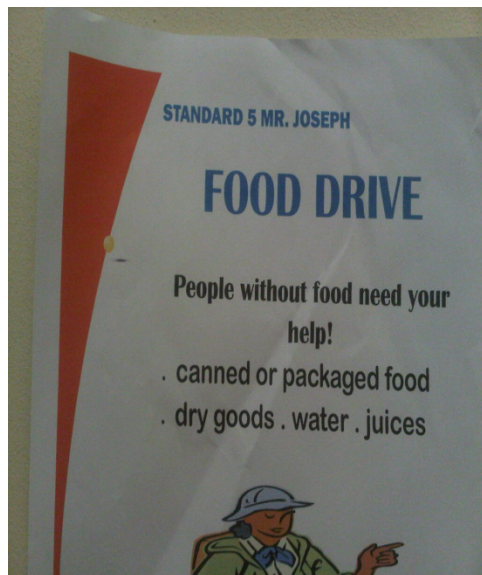
1. Get the students involved
2. Get the parents, and school community involved.
3. Inform as many people as we could about our cause.
4. Assign a collection point.
5. Designate a time period for dropping off of the items.



Take Action



- letters were sent out to parents informing them of the need for assistance.
- students wrote letters petitioning for their cause
- flyers were created to inform everyone about the FOOD DRIVE



FOOD DRIVE POSTER



POSTER UP ON BULLETIN BOARD

23rd March, 2012
 Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing this letter to inform you that we are having a food drive for a family of five in Princess Town. The family's house caught on fire. The father is the sole winner and he got injured in the fire and can't work. The ages range from 3 months to 11 years. The family consists of 6 children and 3 adults.

We are asking you to provide non-perishable items to last them for some time. We are trusting you to give us some goods to help out the family. We really need your help.

We are beginning to contribute.

Respectfully,
 Sacred Heart Girls

23rd March, 2012
 Dear Sir/Madam,

There is a family in Princess Town and their house caught on fire and we are kindly asking you for your assistance in helping them.

Our class is doing a Food Drive so we are also willing to help the family.

The Princess Town family is of 6 children 3 adults. The ages range from 3 months to 11 years old. The father is the sole bread winner and he got injured in the fire and could no longer work.

We would be very happy if you could donate non-perishable items such as: canned and Packaged Food, Water, Juices or Monetary donations.

LETTERS WRITTEN BY STUDENTS ASKING FOR ASSISTANCE

Evaluate the plan

During the event, we realised that we would not be able to realise our goals as far as the amount of food items we expected. This was mainly due to the fact that at the end of our school term there were many distractions, End of Term Test for the Standard 3 Department, a field trip to Tobago which takes a lot of our class time for planning and implementation, preparation for SEA by the Standard 5 Department. The co-ordinating teachers also had a lot of other responsibilities which were school related.

Because time was of the essence, the Standard 3 parents received a follow up letter and a flyer to distribute to their co-workers who in turn distributed copies to interested parties they know, which in turn would widen the pool of contributions. The Secretary at the school was also given letters to distribute to parents of potential First Year students, who were willing to pledge their help.

The Food Drive for the Standard 3 Department extended from the 26th of March until the 6th of April. Even though school is out, the teacher will take the responsibility of visiting the school, which is the collection point during the first week of the Easter vacation, to collect foodstuff which was dropped off.



Food drive contributions

This project was initiated for the first time, by a class at Rosary Boys' R. C. School. Like Allison's Standard Three class, the Food Drive occupied the attention of my class and the pupil's parents from the 26th Of March to the 6th April. An immediate constraint was the fact that my class is in the midst of preparation for this year's S.E.A., which will be administered on the 10th May.

My students were constantly being led through revision activities, exercises and the completion of S.E.A. formatted booklets which aid tremendously in achieving the children's readiness. Diverting their attention from these tasks just mentioned to focus on this Food Drive did require a bit of convincing on my part. Obviously, a more timely intervention in implementing such a project would have added to greater success regarding the collection of non-perishable food items for the deprived family. However, since my students and parents are mainly Christian and my Scheme of Work for Religious Education, does include attitudes and values; convincing my "class family" turned out to be a simple task.

Though most parents preferred to send items from their homes, I did gather the names and addresses of ten business places that contributed Food Items for the family we are assisting. Our class target was not fully attained, but, together with the efforts of my group members' classes we were able to contribute significantly to this worthy cause.

At maple Leaf International School the constraint was the parents' reluctance to contribute names of food related businesses that could be approached for assistance. However, since most of the children's parents are affluent individuals, they were able to make significant personal contributions to the Food Drive which, again, brought tremendous relief to the family being assisted.

The time frame within which this project was implemented proved to make this task quite challenging. With the perseverance of the students and the interventions of the class teacher, a measure of success was realised. The items are presently being collected and package. The completion date of this project is set at the 6th April.

APPLY LEARNING FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF PLAN REPORT:

The teamwork displayed by the children and their parents in writing the letters, each child signing the letters to various food related companies and the parents' personal contributions to this worthy cause, epitomized a collaborative effort to be admired and promoted throughout the schools.

Besides tremendous teamwork, other skills learnt include doing more research on the family being assisted. Running and contributing to meetings based on the project. Writing letters and petitions for extra assistance. Organising into teams for the effective storage and packaging of food items collected.

Our students also learned how to organise an event since part of our project included have a "Tin Day." Our classes had to work as part of a team in our school departments to motivate and encourage other students to donate at least one tinned food item. Pupils learned how to approach business people by first securing an appointment and making a presentation to the targeted business men and women. This also involved a bit of speech making and the use of power point presentations for further emphasis.

RELATE THE PLAN AND ACTIONS TAKEN TO THE SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM.

In our Social Studies curriculum we have various themes and concepts that this project can be used so that students can accomplish the objectives stated.

Following are parts of our National Social Studies Syllabus which are connected to this Take Action Project.

The General Objectives of the Social Studies Syllabus are to develop:

Concepts:

Causes and consequences - to know that our own and others' decisions can have both helpful and harmful effects for ourselves, others and the environment;

Change - to recognize that change is a constant part of life and that we can all work to try and make it change for the better;

Conflict - to be aware that whilst differing wants, needs, beliefs and values can lead to conflict between people and groups, it is possible to work them through;

Co-operation - to understand that we live and work with others all our lives, and that it is rewarding to get on well;

Fairness and justice - to understand that all human beings, whatever their differences, have the right to be valued and treated equally. We all have the right to food, shelter and

just laws;

Interdependence - to be aware of how we are all connected and interdependent with other people and with life on earth. The actions of each one affects the others;

Power - to understand that individuals as well as groups can have influence over their own lives and what goes on in the world. Power is distributed unequally and this affects

people's life changes, rights and welfare;

Similarities and differences - to be aware that while each of us is unique and has a different appearance, ideas and traditions, people share the same basic needs, including the

need for love and acceptance;

Values and beliefs - to recognize and accept that people have differing dreams and goals about getting the best out of their life.

The Specific Objectives of the Subject Strands are:

Citizenship:

Recognizing what they like and dislike, what is fair and unfair and what is right and wrong;

Sharing their opinions on things that matter to them and explain their views;

Recognizing, naming and dealing with their feelings in a positive way;
Thinking about themselves, learning from their experiences and recognizing what they are good at;

Talking and writing about their opinions and explaining their views on issues that affect themselves and society;

Recognizing their worth as individuals by identifying, positive things about themselves and their achievements, seeing their mistakes, making changes and setting personal goals;

Facing new challenges positively by collecting information, looking for help, making responsible choices and taking action.

Personal and Social Education:

Learning about themselves and working with others;

Becoming aware of the needs, rights and views of others;

Learning social skills and a sense of social and moral responsibility;

Developing an active involvement in the life of the school and its neighborhood;

Learning about the wider world and the interdependence of communities within it.

REVISIONS TO THE PROJECT

This project should have been started much earlier in the term thus giving ourselves more time to initiate a more intense and aggressive collection drive. We would have been able to acquire more items because we would have had more time to target a greater number of business concerns to make contributions. Members of our course group were constrained by family commitments, illness and in one case; the needs of a class of S.E.A candidates.

There are avenues to create links to other organisations that assist people in need. Through information from these Non-Governmental Organisations (N.G.O.'s) we could assist more families who suffered through disastrous circumstances.

Contacts in the media could help spread the requests of our pupils for aid from our wider national community so that, ready and adequate relief could be immediately provided for the less fortunate members of our society.

Staging more events such as Walkathon, Mini-Marathon or Talent Shows could help spread more interest in what we are trying to do as a national school community.

“Children are our future.” If our children are encouraged and guided through this action to care for their fellowmen in more tangible ways, then we would be fostering a brighter future for our communities, our countries and the world.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

http://www.moe.gov.tt/Curriculum_pdfs/Social_Studies_Syllabus_Primary_School.pdf

In Craig Harding, J and Sears, A. 2008. Take Action-Make A Difference. Canada: Pearson.

