



ST. SEBASTIAN PARISH SCHOOL

News Release

500 MULL AVENUE



AKRON, OHIO 44320

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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St. Sebastian Students Raise Money for Japan

AKRON, Ohio –

St. Sebastian Parish School hosted “Compassion for Japan Week” May 16-20. A variety of activities took place during the week to raise awareness and raise money to help the children affected by this tragedy.

Students sold “Pray for Japan” bracelets and donated over \$550 in proceeds to Mercy Corps, an international Christian organization that aids children in areas where natural disasters have occurred.

Other activities included making signs, [setting up donation buckets](#), [hosting bake sales](#), saying prayers for the people of Japan and Japanese vocabulary on the morning announcements.

Students were inspired to help the survivors by Joyce Kalb, a Speech and Language Therapist at St. Sebastian. Kalb’s daughter, Kristen, lives in the farming town of Nishiki on the island of Kyushu, just south of Honshu. The family was relieved to hear that their daughter’s island was not affected by the earthquake or tsunami but saddened by what they saw unfold on the news.

Kristen has been teaching English to school-aged children in Japan for three years as part of the JET ([Japan Exchange Teaching](#)) Program.

Since arriving in Japan, Kristen has spoken very highly of the character of the Japanese people, their sweet and gentle spirits, warmth and generous nature, kindness and hospitality, according to her mother.



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“We are grateful for the way the people of Nishiki Town have taken Kristen under their wings, treated her like a daughter, and make her feel so loved and welcome in their country,” said Joyce Kalb.

Last year, Kalb and her husband visited Japan. After Kalb returned, her students in St. Sebastian Parish School’s Speech and Language Therapy program were curious about her trip, so she developed six weeks of lessons about the country of Japan, its customs and food.

When news of the earthquake and tsunami broke, many of these students expressed concern and a desire to help the country of Japan.

Kalb and her students, along with school parent Mrs. Jozic, and students in the “Friends of Rachel Club” decided to dedicate a whole week to “Compassion for Japan.”

Principal Greg Garey called the week “a huge success.” He said “the children of St. Sebastian, once again, showed that the message they learned during Rachel’s Challenge is being carried out in their lives. We are so very proud!”

The Rachel’s Challenge program motivates students to make a positive change in the way they treat others. In January, St. Sebastian Parish School hosted the Rachel’s Challenge program and soon after established a Friends of Rachel Club. Both programs are inspired by Rachel Joy Scott, who was killed at Columbine High School in 1999.



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Photo: Josh Johnson.jpg

Photo Caption: Josh Johnson, a fourth grade student at St. Sebastian Parish School, showcases his poster for Compassion for Japan Week

Photo Credit: St. Sebastian Parish School