



Will Ellis

SIX DEGREES

Haitian crisis necessitates student action

Disaster has struck the poorest country in our hemisphere.

Haiti has felt the wrath of a magnitude 7.0 earthquake which has shattered the everyday life that Haitians have come to know. The infrastructure of Port-au-prince, has been damaged beyond recognition. Buildings have fallen into the streets, transforming what once was a bustling city into a field of rubble.

And beneath all this rubble, beneath the failure of the infrastructure, lies countless people.

This is one of the worst natural disasters the world has seen in recent times, with the death count endlessly rising, and every day the recorded toll of those lost in the rubble rises.

And to make matters worse, Haiti's military was disbanded in 1995, giving the country little organized effort of its own that it can utilize. All it has in that area is a 9,000-person police force at its disposal, a force not nearly large enough to even start to handle the problems the country is currently facing.

It is not just our government's duty to intervene for the Haitian people, but the responsibility of individuals, as members of the global community.

We as Westview students must take note of this destruction, and help however we can. Everywhere there are organizations whose sole purpose is to collect donations to help provide aid in Haiti. There are organizations that are working on collecting supplies for those who have been impacted by this tragedy.

Throughout our school, we are constantly having fundraisers and donations set up for various causes that seem rather removed from our everyday lives, whether it be collecting money for vitamins for the poor in Africa or collecting toys for orphans here in the states. And this is because we at Westview have a strong sense of being part of a global community, to being connected to others. We realize that in the chain of events, people at Westview are bound to be impacted by any disaster around the world.

People across America have relatives living in Haiti, and are anxiously waiting to see if their family members made it out of the catastrophe alive. Also, there are a great number of Americans who were just visiting Haiti at the time and got trapped by the earthquake.

So yes, the destruction may seem like it is just far away, on some island we've barely heard of in the past. It may seem to be completely removed from our lives.

But in reality, we are affected by this horrible event. And we are lucky enough to have the resources to help. Almost every student at Westview is in ownership of a cell phone, allowing them to make a valuable contribution to help the aid in Haiti.

One only needs to text 'Haiti' to 90999 in order to donate \$10 to the Red Cross' efforts in the region. While this may not seem like much, every cent is needed. \$10 could mean the difference in whether or not a person goes hungry, or goes without medical aid.

Your donation could mean the difference between a person's life and their death.

Act for the Arts unites eight groups

Andra Kovacs
FINAL FOCUS EDITOR

For weeks now, a select group of students have been working together to organize Act for the Arts, which takes place Jan. 29, a night where all of Westview's main performance groups come together to put on a show to raise money for the school's art programs. Act for the Arts is a fully student-run program, so representatives from each performing group are responsible for helping plan the night. Jocelyn Tsai (12) is the designated student in charge of the overall planning.

"The show combines all the different types of performing groups," Tsai said. "There are performances by choir, theatre, band, orchestra, step team, JROTC, Dance Troupe and Bayanihan."

Although admission is free, the raffles and donations throughout the night will provide money for their cause to keep the theater and other facilities running.

"We have a raffle where each group presents one basket before the show and during intermission," Tsai said. "The tickets for the raffle are only \$1 each."

Being put in charge, Tsai decided to abandon the tradition of the "normal four" performing groups, which included theatre, choir, band and dance.

"I wanted to make it different, and I thought it was more intriguing to have more groups performing," she said. "Especially since step team and ROTC usually don't have shows, by opening it up to [different clubs], there's a more diverse number of people who'd be attending."

The group of students who are putting together the program meet every



Helen Bavin

Members of Bella Voce rehearse for the upcoming Act for the Arts show, Jan. 29, an annual event that consists of acts from various groups, including choir, theatre, band and dance. Jocelyn Tsai (12) is leading the planning of the events.

Thursday to brainstorm for planning and how to raise awareness and publicity about the performance. Dance Troupe captain Logan Kimberly (12) said that she feels it's really important to get students and the community involved.

"We want people to really see our arts program and see how much it means to us," Kimberly said. "With all the budget cuts, not a lot of money is going toward arts departments and we wanted

to put on a show to show everyone how important arts are."

Tsai said that all the work to plan the night is worth it because it's rewarding to her to be a part of helping the school.

"I like the fact that it's my senior year and I get to be a part of something that raises money for the school," Tsai said. "It's nice to know that for future years I put my part in and raised money and helped the school."

Kimberly said the night is extremely important to her and the other leaders because of their passion for performing.

"I've been a part of the dance program for four years and it would be so sad to see something I love not happen anymore because of money," she said. "Dance is a safe-haven for many girls and I know it's the same for the other art programs so now we're coming together to preserve that passion."

Presentation warns of prescription drug dangers

Andra Kovacs
FINAL FOCUS EDITOR

Nearly 130 parents and administrators walked out of the theater on Jan. 12 with a disturbing image of their children and students in mind and an alarming awareness of the drug problem in North County. The San Diego County drug task force held a presentation at Westview on pharmaceutical drugs and Oxycontin abuse in San Diego. They discussed the growing problem of teens abusing Oxycontin and other pharmaceuticals, especially along the SR 56 corridor.

Football coach Kurt Debnjak is an investigator for San Diego's Department of Health Care Services and specializes in prescription drug cases, and also works on the Oxycontin task force. He said that over the past year he's been making many arrests of teenagers along the 56 corridor who were abusing Oxycontin.

Debnjak and the task force presented their findings to the Westview administration in the beginning of the year.

"The reason I brought it here was because I wanted to make sure that people were on the forefront of knowing about it and not learning it the hard way by some kid overdosing and dying here at Westview," Debnjak said.

After the faculty presentation, Principal Dawn Kastner said she knew it had to be addressed with parents.

She felt it gave them information and tools to be vigilant parents. The presentation focused mostly on the popular drugs and why parents need to be worried. It also focused on how, despite being considered a "clean drug," Oxycontin and other pharmaceuticals can be seriously dangerous.

"Everybody thinks that prescription drug medication, especially painkillers, are safer," Debnjak said. "But they are being greatly abused and are just as dangerous as marijuana, cocaine and methamphetamines when used in the wrong way or too much. Oxycontin is especially dangerous because it is essentially a synthetic heroin."

The presenters discussed how the more widely accepted marijuana can be a gateway to Oxycontin, which can, over time, escalate to a use of harder drugs.

"The concern is that some of these prescription drugs kids are getting, especially things like Oxycontin, are so highly addictive that just using them a few times can cause an addiction," Kastner said. "And when people can't afford those more expensive pills anymore then they tend to start taking cheaper things like heroine instead. I'm listening to that as a parent and thinking, 'Oh man, you wouldn't know to watch for that.'"

These addictions are becoming more common, according to the San Diego County coroner's report. Their statistics show that from 2004 to 2006 there were 17 Oxycontin-related deaths, but in 2008 to 2009, that number jumped to 53. These numbers don't include car accident deaths although almost all heavy users admit to driving while under the influence.

The presentation's purpose was to raise awareness and hopefully help prevent these problems at Westview before they really begin. Debnjak said that he thinks to really have an impact on the community, meetings like this need to happen on a more regular basis.

"For the first couple months after the meeting, everyone's really diligent and the parents are really watching their kids, but after a few months they start forgetting about it," he said. "I think with a problem like this, you have to really keep re-educating families and have it fresh in their mind that this is a problem. It's going to take time but I think you'll see a difference."

Debnjak said the problem of pharmaceutical drug abuse is not going to disappear with one presentation, but he hopes it will at least make a minor difference.

"If I can affect even one or two people to change their lives, then it was worth it," she said. "That's really what I want to try to do. I think we can change people's lives."

ASB abandons formalities, finalizes plans for winter informal

Melissa Truong
MANAGING EDITOR

Girls, forget stressing out about what dress and heels to wear for Winter Formal. Guys, don't even think about picking up the phone to rent that tuxedo.

You won't even need them.

For the first time in Westview history, Winter Formal has been changed to Winter Informal.

The theme this year is "Ready, Set, Glow." Since last November, sophomore class presidents Nicole Rosario (10) and Lauren Wang (10) have met together almost every day in ASB to work on planning the dance, coordinating with volunteers, ordering decorations and working with the DJ and photographer.

"We wanted to do something different and make it informal rather than formal because hopefully more people will come to it since they won't have [to buy dresses and rent tuxedos]," Wang said.

Since it is Wang and Rosario's first time planning a school dance, and also because the sophomore class presidents traditionally plan Winter Formal, they wanted to make it stand out.

"We got the idea of having an informal dance from other schools and thought it would be cool since Westview has never had one before," Rosario said. "We're hoping for a lot of student support with this."

Wang said that she and Rosario have big plans for decorations before the dance, Feb. 6.

"As soon as students walk in, we'd like

to have a huge graffiti wall, like a 'wow' factor," Rosario said. "As for pictures, you go with your friends and pay \$5 for two pictures. After the dance, those pictures will all be uploaded on Facebook and students can go in and tag the pictures yourself. It's cheaper and you can order prints if you still want."

Unlike previous dances, ticket prices will stay the same at \$9.99, for all three weeks leading up to the dance.

"We just wanted a fun, inexpensive dance," Wang said.

However, breaking the traditional mold for having a formal dance was not the only thing that Wang and Rosario were concerned about.

"We just wanted to appeal more to a wider audience," Rosario said. "Girls don't

have to spend so much money getting their hair done at the salon. They don't have to spend \$200 on a dress, and they don't have to worry about what heels to wear with that dress."

The fact that Westview has never had an informal dance brings up an obvious question. What exactly does one wear to a Winter Informal?

"Go crazy," Wang said. "Girls can wear tutus or crazy neon shirts or white and colorful clothes."

But, "go crazy" does not mean that students will be able to get away with just anything.

"Dress crazy, but dress appropriately," Rosario said. "School dress codes will still be enforced, even though it is a dance. Keep it PG, keep it covered."

READY, SET, GLOW!
WINTER DANCE

WESTVIEW'S FIRST
INFORMAL DANCE.
CHEAPER PICTURES, CHEAPER
OUTFITS, CHEAPER TICKETS

FEB. 6
7:30 P.M. - 10:30 P.M.

WEAR ANYTHING, "GO CRAZY"
KEEP IT PG.

Sidebar by Yoojin Kim

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'Charity:water' raises money to fill wells with clean water

Anna Buckley
STAFF WRITER

The average Westview student can walk to his refrigerator and grab a bottle of clean, cold water if he's thirsty. But what he may not realize is that one in every eight people in the world doesn't have access to clean water.

Forty-two thousand people die every week due to unsanitary water conditions, 90 percent of whom are under 5 years old.

This is the message that Westview's new Charity:water Club aims to get out to the Westview students.

"I really wanted to start Charity:water at Westview because I felt that living in PQ, we sometimes forget how fortunate we are," co-president Emily Usaha (10) said. "Clean water is something we take for granted here and we often don't realize that there are millions of people who are drinking unsafe water every day."

This new club at Westview, which meets every other Wednesday in room G113, is a part of the larger organization, Charity:water. This organization raises money for people in developing countries who often have to walk three hours a day to reach water because they don't have wells where they live. The water that they spend three hours to reach is sometimes not even sanitary.

"Many kids in these developing countries have to miss school to help their parents fetch water, but if they could have a well built at their school they wouldn't need to miss out on their education," Usaha said.

The Charity:water club at Westview aims to raise

\$1,000 by April for the larger organization, which would help build clean water wells. The Westview chapter has its own website, mycharitywater.org/vhw-swwaterforschools, where students can donate money to reach the \$1,000 goal.

"We plan to start doing some fundraising activities, like car washes, selling Charity:water bracelets, having a business sponsor us and things like that," Usaha said.

The club plans to begin their fundraising activities as soon as possible.

"We want to have a fundraising night at a restaurant where we talk about Charity:water, ask for donations and get people to join the cause," Usaha said. "We also plan to raise awareness through social networking like Facebook and MySpace."

Usaha said she believes that Charity:water will be able to make a difference and make students realize that people in developing countries need help.

"Our current members had not known anything about Charity:water and about the conditions people in these third-world countries live in," she said. "But now after a couple meetings, they know about the cause and it seems as though they all want to help make a difference."

As the club starts up, Usaha hopes that they will be able to make an impact in the future and reach their goal.

"At this point, we have only had two meetings and we have a lot of work ahead of us," she said. "I hope we will be able to share our mission with the rest of the school and inspire Westview students to help give. I also hope that we realize how lucky we are to have access to clean water."