



Frankfort-Schuyler

CENTRAL SCHOOL

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For Immediate Release

Frankfort-Schuyler Friends of Rachel Club Adopts Houston Classroom Affected by Hurricane Harvey

September 27, 2017 (Frankfort, NY) - Students, faculty, staff and administration at the Frankfort-Schuyler Central School District are stepping up to help students and teachers in Houston, Texas who have been impacted by Hurricane Harvey.

The Frankfort-Schuyler High School Friends of Rachel Club recently coordinated the collection of books and monetary donations as part of a district-wide Adopt-a-Classroom project to benefit St. Thomas Episcopal School in Houston, Texas. St. Thomas Episcopal, a school which serves approximately 643 students in grades K-12, was heavily damaged by Hurricane Harvey's torrential rainfall and flooding in early September.

After hearing about the Adopt-a-Classroom program from Superintendent of Schools Robert Reina, Friends of Rachel Club Advisor and High School Chorus Teacher Shelley Ceglia registered to be matched with a school in need. Two days later, Ceglia received notification that Frankfort-Schuyler had been paired with Peggy McGough's third grade classroom at St. Thomas Episcopal Elementary.

St. Thomas Episcopal specifically named teacher desks, bookshelves and books for third through fifth grade reading level as their most urgent needs. Due to the distance between the two schools, Ceglia and the Friends of Rachel Club determined that a book drive would be the best way for Frankfort-Schuyler to help.

"This book drive has given our students the opportunity to put into practice one of the five fundamental challenges of Rachel's Challenge – start your own chain reaction," said Ceglia. "The students have embraced the chance to pay it forward, knowing the difference it would make for everyone at St. Thomas."

The Friends of Rachel Club is based on Rachel's Challenge – a program designed to encourage good deeds and wise actions. The program was inspired by Rachel Scott, the first person to tragically lose their life at the Columbine High School shooting in 1999. The Club's primary goal is to make a positive difference in and out of school, as well as in the life of every individual.

"We've talked about how difficult the start of the school year is under normal circumstances and how impossible it would seem if our homes and schools were damaged or destroyed, and if we were without power," remarked Ceglia. "This project is teaching our students the importance of stepping up to help others in times of need and has taught many of them the joy that comes from service and giving to others. Our school community was not only willing, but eager to help."

In just two weeks, the Friends of Rachel Club collected 33 boxes of surplus books donated from the Frankfort-Schuyler Elementary School library and more than 800 additional books donated by

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students, staff and community members. A total of 41 boxes of donated books will be shipped, at no cost to the schools, by Steve Harth of Unishippers who volunteered to donate the shipping when contacted about the project.

With the large number of books that were donated, bookshelves for storage also became a necessity. The Frankfort-Schuyler Teachers Association and members of the faculty, staff, administration and Board of Education contributed \$750 in monetary donations for the purchase of 17 bookshelves that were ordered and shipped directly to St. Thomas Episcopal last week. The bookshelves will be shared and distributed throughout the entire elementary school.

While classes at St. Thomas Episcopal have resumed and students have been moved into temporary classrooms, the hard work of bringing their school and community back to its prior state continues.

"When one of our parents forwarded the Adopt-a-Classroom site it sounded like a Godsend," said McGough. "After reading Shelley's email it brought tears to my eyes. We've spent many days salvaging what we can from our classrooms and watching a professional company come in and discard the rest. Knowing that there are wonderful people willing to help us through this devastation keeps us moving forward with a bit more confidence."

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Pictured (from left): Members of Frankfort-Schuyler Friends of Rachel Club -- Sofia Randazzo, Sophia LoRe, Kyle Ferguson, Korin Mucurio, Bryce MacDonald, Chris Millington, Sicilia Randazzo

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