

Teens for the Future

By Julia Friedland 8th grade

In this day, there are many tragic and tear-choking events happening both in our own community, and over seas. The War in Iraq, the Genocide in Darfur, and even smaller things may go unnoticed. These measures have caused many to feel compassionately, and some want to make a change. Who are these people? We are the "Teens For The Future".

The Teens For the Future (TFTF) has spent the year volunteering our time, working for the things that inspired us. We teens spent our after-school afternoons in town, not buying pizza, or hanging out as so many do (and I'm sure we would have been doing) but fund raising. We strived tediously, toiling away, and managed to raise over \$400 for charity. What did we do with this money? The TFTF under the leadership of Suna Senman-Lane decided to use it to solve a particular dilemma over in Darfur. Because of the violence, many civilians cannot do simple shopping, or even leave the house without the risk of death. With so much violence, any form of "normal life" is comforting. For children, "normal life" is going to school. As the TFTF discovered, helping children in Darfur experience "normal life" meant getting them school supplies. We focused on collecting composition notebooks. We set a goal of collecting one thousand composition notebooks to ship to Darfur. With the money, we were able to purchase some of these notebooks, but not nearly enough. Their solution: a competition. The TFTF asked three middle schools, Fox Lane, John Jay, and our very own Bell School to compete in a competition to raise the most notebooks. As you know (or could guess) the competition caused heated results! The TFTF collected nearly 800 notebooks - a number greater than expected. A plaque was sent to the winning school, John Jay, and almost 1200 notebooks were sent to Darfur along with some of the extra-special pencils made for TFTF!

Another feat preformed by the TFTF is one a little closer to home. Our group volunteered at an organization called Neighbors Link. This organization was established because of the large Hispanic population, which speaks little English. Adults in this category may go to English class at night, but wait, who will watch their children!? Neighbor's Link is there to also baby-sit the kids while their families are away learning. The Teens For the Future helped to cook a diner, serve and take care of the children. Reflecting upon the experience, the TFTF came to the conclusion that serving in the community, in a way, was better than all the collection they'd been doing, because it was something they were helping with directly, and they knew exactly where what they did was going.

You have read about the good deeds of the TFTF up until now, and I'm sure you've wondered their motives, no? The teens sat down to discuss why they were in the Teens For the Future, and many of them agreed that their mission statement was "To make awareness of needs" and "to create respect of others and respect of self through setting an example" Finally, Teens for the Future adapted Martin Luther King Jr.'s statement "...judged by the content of their character" as a motto to live by.