

Raising money with food, fun

Barbecue will benefit 12-classroom school in Ethiopia

By Michelle Sartor

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Demarest — It was an afternoon of fun and games for students at Demarest Middle School. They got to participate in carnival activities such as the high jump, an egg and spoon race and they tried their hand at the dunk tank, attempting to drench teachers and Principal Michael Fox. At the end of the day they even got to help one teacher shave his head.



Photo courtesy of Jonathon Regan

Social studies teacher Jonathon Regan lets students shave his head after the second annual Demarest Middle School barbecue surpassed last year's amount of money raised.



Staff photo by Joe Camporeale

Students participate in the egg and spoon race during the June 5 barbecue that raised money to build a school in Ethiopia.

While fun was the main order of the day, the purpose of the school's second annual barbecue was more serious. Demarest Middle School's Global Care Unlimited organized the event to raise money to help build the Ethio-American Friendship School in Awassa, Ethiopia.

This year's event, held June 5, raised more than \$8,700 according to social studies teacher Jonathon Regan. He heads Global Care Unlimited at Demarest Middle School. In addition to being in the dunk tank, Regan let the students shave his head at the end of the day.

"I told the kids if they beat what we did last year that they could shave my head," Regan said. Last year's total amount raised was about \$8,000 so Regan kept his promise.

Regan and his students were happy to help a worthy cause. "The kids had a great time. It was for a great cause. We've raised a lot of money," Regan said.

Demarest students aren't the only ones involved in helping make the Ethiopian school a reality. Global Care Unlimited is a partnership between Demarest Middle School and Tenafly Middle School students.

According to Regan, the schools have raised a combined total of \$34,000. The final goal is \$65,000 to build a 12-classroom school.

The money raised in our area will go toward "everything from concrete to roofs over the school," said Regan.

While Ethiopia is a long way from Demarest, Global Care Unlimited has a partner there. Yohannes Gebregeorgis is an Ethiopian man who fled his country in 1981 and came to the United States as a political refugee. He became a librarian, but left his job and life in this country in 2002 to return to Ethiopia.

Gebregeorgis now establishes libraries and literacy programs for Ethiopians to get children interested in books.

"He is a really awesome guy. He bought a donkey cart and went around to rural villages reading to kids," Regan said. "He's the one that's actually on the ground and overseeing the entire project."

Gebregeorgis was recently recognized for his good deeds as a CNN Hero by the cable news channel.

While Ethiopia may seem like a world away to students, those involved in the Demarest Middle School barbecue know they helped make a difference for that country's children.

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