



Our World Neighborhood Charter School
Elementary School
Kindergarten to Grade 5
36-12 35th Avenue
Astoria, NY 11106

Middle School
Grade 6 to Grade 8
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Astoria, NY 11103

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MEDIA ALERT
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Queens Charter School Supports Fundraising Efforts for Japan

Students make Origami Cranes in Solidarity with the people of Japan affected by the recent Disasters

Astoria, Queens- Students are learning a different, more profound use for paper as they make their origami cranes in solidarity for the people in Japan. Our World Neighborhood Charter School (OWNCS) has joined the global effort to raise funds for those affected by the recent disasters in Japan by making paper cranes in exchange for donations to Students Rebuild and DoSomething.org. Classes were found intently folding paper throughout the day on Tuesday, March 22, 2011 to help Students Rebuild reach their goal.

In Japanese culture, origami cranes are synonymous with good fortune and favor. People in Japan fold 1,000 cranes to give them hope when they are going through a difficult time in their lives. In honor of this tradition, Students Rebuild has partnered with DoSomething.org to collect 100,000 paper cranes for which the Bezos Family Foundation has committed a \$200,000 donation. Every paper crane made and sent to the Bezos Family Foundation will generate a \$2 donation to Architecture for Humanity, the organization leading the reconstruction efforts in Japan.

The Principal of OWNCS, Brian Ferguson, initiated the origami crane project. He was expressing his sympathies about the disasters with a few of the Japanese families last week and broached the idea of doing a school-wide project for Japan. He emailed the school community about possibly folding origami animals and opened up discussion about ideas amongst the teachers and staff at the school. The school's librarian, Mrs. Suzanne Sharkey, came across the origami crane project on the Internet and presented the idea to Mr. Ferguson. After some coordination, a group of Japanese parents quickly mobilized to teach the students the art of origami and the significance of the paper cranes in Japanese culture. Mr. Ferguson states, "It's important that as a school we acknowledge what's going on in the world and make our students aware of the world around them. We want them to care about people beyond their own community."

Our World Neighborhood Charter School was founded in 2002 and is located in Astoria, Queens. The school is committed to an educational philosophy based on inquiry, active and experiential learning, and social justice. As one of the most diverse schools in New York City, OWNCS is dedicated to teaching its students about their world in as interactive a manner as possible.