

Charter School Students Raise Money for Cancer Research

Math class takes part in Math-a-Thon to Raise Awareness and Funds for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

Astoria, Queens- A group of Middle School students at Our World Neighborhood Charter School (OWNCS) participated in a Math-a-Thon charity project to benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. As part of the project, 6th grade students from a Math class at OWNCS completed math workbooks and got sponsors to donate money to St. Jude.

The St. Jude Math-A-Thon is a free, education-based program for grades K-8 that benefits St. Jude while helping kids improve their math skills. On the St. Jude website, the Math-a-Thon is described as a "program [that] is designed to complement existing curriculums while teaching students the importance of helping others." In preparation for the project, students at OWNCS were shown a video that describes the kind of work that St. Jude does. The video explains that the hospital operates on mostly donations from individuals and emphasizes the value of giving.

The 6th grade Mathematics teacher at OWNCS, Janice Hyland, brought the St. Jude Math-a-Thon program to OWNCS after reading about it in her local newspaper. She thought it would be a great experience for her students to take part in. Mrs. Hyland guides the students through the project and ultimately sends in the completed math workbooks and donations. The program has become an annual project, and Mrs. Hyland's classes have raised over \$3,000 over the past 5 years. All the proceeds go to research and financial support to the hospital.

This kind of social awareness initiative has spurred a spirit of service within the students at OWNCS. A handful of students who participated in the Math-a-Thon have decided to organize a large group of students to shovel snow for St. Jude. Mrs. Hyland says, "The program promotes a sense of community. The students learn about other children their own age that are living with cancer and are able to directly help them."

Our World Neighborhood Charter School was founded in 2002 and is located in Astoria, Queens. It is the mission of Our World Neighborhood Charter School to educate its students to become independent thinkers and lifelong learners. The school is committed to an educational philosophy based on inquiry, active and experiential learning, and social justice.