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Small Students, Big Efforts. SDJA Students Raise Funds For The Victims Of Japan Earthquakes

Inspired by a simple classroom lesson, young students at San Diego Jewish Academy raised funds for the victims of the Japan earthquakes on their own initiative.

San Diego, **CA** – **July 14**, **2011** – Students at San Diego Jewish Academy's (SDJA) Golda Meir Lower School raised \$756 to help the people of Japan after devastating earthquakes and floods ravaged their country in March of 2011. Initiated and inspired by SDJA's fourth grade class, students as young as four years old took action to help those in need.

"In early March, around the time of the Japan earthquake, I began teaching my regularly scheduled guidance lessons to SDJA's fourth graders with the theme being heroes, both famous and every day," said Roxanne Hersh, Golda Meir Lower School guidance counselor. "In one of the lessons, students learned about a program started by a single individual who helped raise funds to build schools for children in Afghanistan. This story inspired our students to take action and help the victims of the Japan earthquakes."

SDJA's fourth grade students mobilized the entire school by campaigning for *tzedakah* (pocket change) and encouraged the rest of the school to do the same. "It was inspiring to see so many young students come together to help others," said Debbie Kornberg, SDJA's director of Judaics. "The students created "Help Japan" flyers and posted them around campus and spoke in various classrooms to encourage others to help.

Due to the efforts of the fourth grade class, kindergarten to fifth grade students also began bringing in pocket change. "The response was overwhelming," said Kornberg. Students of all ages began raising funds through lemonade stands, garage sales and bake sales.

The money raised by the students was far more meaningful than just monetary support. It was an example of how "service based learning" can teach students values. Through this project, GMLS students learned the Jewish value *tikkun olam*, repairing the world, and *gemilut hasadim*, deeds of loving kindness, as well as life skills such as problem solving, teamwork and advocacy. The funds raised were donated to the American Joint Distribution Committee which has in turn set-up a special Japan Earthquake and Tsunami Relief Fund to help those in need.

About SDJA:

San Diego Jewish Academy provides infants to high school seniors with a unique environment of acceptance and community that challenges students to achieve their full academic potential and become individuals of strong character, while inspiring them to make Judaism a vital and relevant aspect of their lives.

For more information about San Diego Jewish Academy, visit www.sdja.com.

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Photo Caption: SDJA students show signs and boxes made to gather donations for the victims of the Japan earthquakes.