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Club travels from Princeton, gives boro children gifts

By Kimberly Mollo

LAVALLETTE — On Wednesday, a group of students at Lavallette Elementary School got a visit from their Princeton peers, and received some special gifts in the process.

The Princeton Junior School's Glitter Lemonade Club took a trip to the borough to bring toys and gifts to a group of students at Lavallette School who lost many of their possessions due to Hurricane Sandy, Katie Pottinger, director of communications for Glitter Lemonade, said.

"After learning of the devastation that Lavallette School suffered during the Hurricane, our club reached out to them to find out how we could help," she said. "We were told that although the school had been displaced indefinitely, they had all the supplies they needed."

The most pressing concern, then, was a group of students whose homes had been devastated and most of their possessions lost, she said.

Glitter Lemonade Club members discussed what it would feel like to lose all of their favorite books and toys, and the children decided to try and help the students at Lavallette who had been most greatly affected, Ms. Pottinger said.

The club came up with the idea to host a book and toy drive at Princeton Junior School in order to raise enough money to help replace some of their peers' most treasured items.



Over the winter, club members wrote letters to various book and toy companies asking for donations toward the book and toy drive, which took place in March. They also made flyers and signs to help advertise the drive.

Many Princeton Junior School families and friends who attended the drive donated directly to the Lavallette students by looking at their wish lists and shopping for them, Ms. Pottinger said. Club supervisors were able to further fill out the wish baskets using proceeds from the drive.

During the trip on Wednesday, club members met the children that they have been working to help, along with their families.

The students gave a short presentation about their efforts and then gave the wish list children their gift baskets.

After the presents were given out, there was a special surprise for the Princeton Junior School students to thank them for their compassion and kindness — an ice cream party and show at The Music Man Singing Ice Cream Shoppe in Lavallette.

ABOUT GLITTER LEMONADE

Princeton Junior School announced this year an educational alliance with Glitter Lemonade, a New Jersey based non-profit 501 (c)3 foundation that nurtures compassion and social responsibility in children.

Twenty-five third- to fifth-graders have eagerly volunteered to participate in a pilot program, called the Glitter

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Students from Princeton Junior School's Glitter Lemonade Club visited Lavallette on Wednesday, where they were treated to a special show and ice cream at The Music Man. Photo by SUEANNE GOSS, STAR NEWS GROUP

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Lemonade Club, whose purpose is to foster a life-long commitment to community service.

This innovative program allows students to express their concerns and encourages them to implement their own unique solutions through hands-on projects that they themselves devise.

“Our organization is dedicated to partnering with parents, teachers and youth advisors to empower a new generation of active, philanthropic and engaged members of society,” Glitter Lemonade Founder Halle Madia said. “It is not simply about being charitable, but rather about helping children recognize needs and injustices in our world and mobilizing them to take action.”

“We provide the support they need to respond to those concerns through giving, volunteering, and activism. The Princeton Junior School is the ideal environment for our first Club,” she added. “The students there are among the most informed and compassionate children I have met.”

The club’s first goal was to help provide relief to the students of Lavallette Elementary school in Lavallette, many of whom have seen their homes and all of their personal belongings destroyed as a result of Hurricane Sandy.

“In a day and age when there are so many disconnections for people, Glitter Lemonade is giving our students a chance to connect and see their impact in a positive way,” Silvana Clark, head of Princeton Junior School, said. “Too often as an educator I have seen children who are eager to make a difference in their community but with no idea how to go about it. This is finally an opportunity for our students to act on their beliefs in a systematic way. My hope is that by internalizing this process, they will become independent agents for change.”

For more information on the organization, please visit www.glitterlemonade.com.

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