



Madeira Board of Education, 7465 Loannes Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45243
Kenji Matsudo, Superintendent
Dave Bergan, Assistant Superintendent,
Diane Nichols, Public Relations

February 2, 2023

Madeira Service Club Reaches out 5,000 Miles to Help

The Madeira High School (MHS) Key Club is a service-oriented organization whose 175 student members volunteer at over fifty events a year. They also sponsor one major fundraiser, 'Pictures with Santa,' which takes place each December at Madeira's Community Building.

To select where they'd like to donate the proceeds from their annual fundraiser, any students in Key Club who have an organization or cause that is special to them are usually asked to introduce it to the other club members. This year a cause came to them via a Madeira community member.

Madeira resident Jay Dewitt serves on the Cincinnati-Kharkiv Sister City Partnership Board. He knew about the MHS Key Club from his children attending Madeira Schools. Dewitt told Bob Herring, the President of the Cincinnati USA Sister City Association, about Madeira High School's Key Club as a potential partner stating, "I'm always thinking of ways to get Madeira students involved in international affairs." Herring met with Key Club leaders Halle Beck, Diego Ramirez-Laverde, Anna Lewis, Lily Zoeckler, Mateo Ramirez-Laverde, and Chloe Bowles who decided it was a cause they'd like to champion.

Herring returned to Madeira High School and gave a Powerpoint presentation about the Sister Cities Partnership with Kharkiv to the entire MHS Key Club. He included the history of what led to Ukraine's current state, the sister cities partnership's mission, photos of homes and schools destroyed by Russian forces, and examples of the Red Cross' help there. He shared that a \$2 donation buys a pair of socks, \$12 buys a hat, and \$40 buys a pair of pants. Following the powerful presentation, the students voted to donate the \$600 they raised in December to the Red Cross in Kharkiv, Ukraine. "Amidst the current global events, we know that there is a lot of destruction and suffering in Ukraine," Mateo Ramirez-Laverde explained. "As a club, we thought our proceeds could best be donated to the Kharkiv Red Cross because they help with delivering emergency aid, including food, bedding, water, and hygiene items, providing medical care to the wounded, and first aid training to people in Ukraine, and most of all helping refugees connect with missing loved ones."

Kharkiv is one of nine of our city's partnerships through the Cincinnati Sister City Association – along with Liuzhou, China; Munich, Germany; Gifu, Japan; New Taipei City, Taiwan; Harare, Zimbabwe; Nancy, France; Mysore, India; and Amman, Jordan. The International Sister City program was created by President Eisenhower to promote mutual understanding through exchanges. The Cincinnati Sister City Association is currently completely organized and run by volunteer citizens.

MHS Key Club members are also required to participate in at least four events to be considered an active member. They participate in the NEEDS Pantry Drive, Changing Hands Consignments Sale, Project Linus, Matthew 25 Ministries, MHS concessions, athletic events, and the Madeira Schools Foundation Auction – among many others. MHS Key Club advisors are Kim Homer and Julie Leugers.



Pictured at the MHS Key Club's 2022 'Pictures with Santa' (l to r); Nora Katz, Diego Ramirez-Laverde, Pablo Ramirez-Laverde, Santa, Rain Willison, Halle Beck, Kate Manzi, Zimmer Combs, and Lauren Mast.