

BHS Community Service Highlights, 2018-19

September-October

Making Strides for Breast Cancer/Hot Pink BHS: Every year since 1999, a group from BHS has walked in the American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk, and, in more recent year, with club members (and me) raising money separately for our team. We combine efforts of the walkers, the BHS community, and the larger Belmont community to fight breast cancer and support the BHS Making Strides team. The breast cancer "season" began in August, when a small group of students accompanied me to the Kick-Off breakfast. Because we were in the top 5 teams (4th place and \$13,537) in the 2017 High School Challenge in Metro Boston, we were on the stage at the Hatch Shell to kick off the walk this past October.

Stewarded by Belmontian's Hot Pink Committee, many fundraisers were on the schedule. Students sold small breast-cancer themed items, held a t-shirt slogan contest and sold "We Can Do It" T-shirts (at school, at the Belmont and Mt. Auburn Star Markets, at the "Pinkout" football game and at conferences). Local merchants supported the cause (and our team), by donating door prizes for our annual "Pinkapalooza" (a day to wear pink), and with monetary support of the team, as well. A Chocolate Dream, Bells & Whistles, Belmont Books, Bessie Blue, Body Trio, Champions, Didrik's and Local Root, Moozy's, Nick's Pizza II, Quebrada, Terra Firma, The Toy Shop of Belmont, and 30 Petals, Bertucci's (Alewife) and Chipotle each donated a portion of their revenue generated on specific days to our team. Marcou Jewelers made a monetary contribution, as did Leading Edge real estate agents (matched by the business). The Bay State Foundation also sent us a substantial check. As always, we partnered with Belmont Car Wash and dried cars for eight hours on a Saturday; Belmont Car Wash donated \$1 per car and all of the tips to our cause.



As the last hurrah of the campaign, the "Hot Pink Committee" created "Pink Your Presidents," a class wars fundraiser, in which the officers of each class agreed that if their class raised at least at least \$150, the officers would have their hair sprayed pink for Halloween. As additional encouragement, Ashley Landry said that if two classes raised at least \$150, she would have her hair sprayed as well. (She is pictured below in the middle of the front row!)



From all of these activities, in 2018, we were able to contribute \$15,332 to the American Cancer Society's efforts in breast cancer education, research, prevention, and treatment. As first-place finishers (for the first time) in the 2018 High School Challenge, the team will again be on the stage of the Hatch Shell for the 2019 walk on September 29, rallying the crowd. In addition, we were able to donate t-shirts to Middlesex Human Service Agency and the Hoffman Breast Center at Mt. Auburn Hospital.

Haunted House: The Leadership Team again held their Halloween fundraiser, this year raising approximately \$300 to benefit Samaritans, the suicide prevention hot line (where many of our students volunteer).

November-January

Senior Citizen Thanksgiving "Dinner": BHS students were asked again to wait on the town's senior citizens at their Thanksgiving Dinner luncheon at the Beech Street Center.

Snowflakes: This is one of our most ambitious activities of the year, where we sell glittery plastic snowflake ornaments to students and staff, who order them to be delivered to their friends, colleagues, and students. (Parents also order snowflakes for their students and their BHS friends). All of the money goes to provide gifts for clients of Community Servings, which delivers 650,000 meals a year to 2,300 critically ill individuals and their families in Eastern Massachusetts (as far away as Worcester and Lawrence) and now, in Rhode Island (a pilot program). Students do the snowflake selling, assembly, and delivery as well as the shopping for gifts for 10 people. (This year Community Service changed the protocol: rather than buying for particular people, we were given generic lists of gifts for children [our students love shopping for kids, and Community Servings loves our snowflake project, so they fill our wishes as we fill their clients'!])



Toys4Joys: BHS and a few classes in other Belmont schools contributed to a collection of toys for foster children in Massachusetts.

Senior Citizens Holiday Luncheon: By longstanding tradition, BHS students are asked every year to wait on the town's elders at the annual Council on Aging Holiday Luncheon. Wearing holiday gear, the teens serve, clean up, and spread holiday cheer.

Martin Luther King Day Breakfast: BHS students help annually with set up, serving, clean up, and child care at this community event tradition.

Socks: Lisa Fiore, through her Child Homelessness Initiative at Lesley University, received boxes of new socks from Bomba. She reached out to me and gave us 4 boxes (12 dozen each) of adult socks to distribute as we thought best. Working to Help the Homeless (WTHH) members researched and voted on the organizations they wanted to help. I delivered the socks to Rosie's Place, Boston Rescue Mission in Boston, Y2Y (the shelter for homeless youth in Cambridge), and Middlesex Human Service Agency in Waltham (they run a soup kitchen, shelters, rehab and detox programs).

Snow Shoveling for Senior Citizens (all winter): BHS students sign up to be shoveling resources for Belmont's senior citizens. The Council on Aging matches residents with students to keep the sidewalks open and ice-free. Over 50 students signed up to shovel during this not-so-snowy winter.

Toiletries Drive: WTHH held a competitive and very successful toiletries drive through the Math Department. Approximately 1,000 items were brought in to benefit the Middlesex Human Service Agency, which is located in Waltham and operates a soup kitchen, shelters, and rehab and detox programs.

February-March

Pajamarama: Once again, we joined the Cradles to Crayons/Bruins Pajama Drive, which provides new warm pajamas for poor and homeless children in Massachusetts. In February, the Belmontian Club raised money at the high school and organized "Wear PJ's for A Buck" day in which Burbank and Wellington participated. . As part of the campaign, we held

"Pajamarama", a PJ day at BHS, where students and staff were encouraged to wear warm pj's and to contribute to the cause in order to be eligible for many door prizes donated by local merchant. Bertucci's (Alewife) and Chipotle (Fresh Pond) set up days in which a percentage of sales went to Cradles to Crayons. We raised money at Star Market on the day before the Super Bowl. As usual, we also partnered with Belmont Car Wash for a second car wash this year. Held in late April, \$1 a car was donated by the car wash and we were allowed to keep all the tips we collected. From all these events, we raised \$3560, along with donations of 93 pairs of new warm pj's.

Daffodil Days for the American Cancer Society: Once again the Belmontian Club formed a committee which offered participation to BHS parents and to staff system-wide. Our total, \$1200, is being applied to our fall 2019 Making Strides Against Breast cancer team.

Hunger Banquets: Responding to a request from Kris Comment for Diversity Day, the Hunger Banquet Committee of the Belmontian Club held two Hunger Banquets, back to back, with 150 students at each "performance". The Hunger Banquet consists of participants picking an identity from the "bag of fate," which determines their socio-economic standing for the event. A breakfast is served to all three groups, but the meals vary, with the wealthy being served by "wait staff" with "luxury" settings and a nutritious and delicious meal, while the low income group sits on the floor and ladles out for themselves dry cereal (no milk!) and water to drink. Information about hunger is presented in a variety of ways, including handouts, scenarios in which students participate, and a game of Cahoot. With the platform from last year, the students added some more modern and local information and a slide show. The feedback was positive, and the students already have plans for next year.

Make A Statement Day: This was the 16th annual MASD, where free t-shirts are provided for students and teachers to decorate with an expression of who they are. The event is held in the cafeteria, and hundreds of students and staff members participate. A 3-student committee (a sophomore, junior, and senior) organized the event, writing grants which provide funding from the Belmont Police DARE program, the BHS PTO, and Belmont Against Racism. DARE Officer Horan made the rounds of his former students and was delighted with the event. The Belmontian Club and WTHH members baked desserts for the participants. On the day following the creation of the shirts, students and faculty wear their creations and discuss.



Coffeehouse for a Cause: In this fifth annual coffeehouse sponsored by WTHH, student performers auditioned for slots and performed magnificently before about 200 audience members in the cafe. The students served ice cream and home-baked desserts at intermission, and raised over \$800 to benefit Y2Y, the Harvard Square shelter for youth between 18 and 24 years old.



Rosie's Place: WTHH holds a fundraiser at Star Market every November to be able to cater a meal at Rosie's Place in March. The students prep, serve, and clean up and are able to interact with the guests who arrive.

April-June

Stocking Y2Y's Pantry: Y2Y (Youth to Youth), now four years-old, was started by Harvard students (now Harvard Business School alums who head the shelter and were named by Forbes magazine's 30 under 30 in the social entrepreneurship category a couple of years ago). Harvard student volunteers take leadership roles and also are the daily volunteers. This food drive is an annual service event for WTHH. Club members and I spent 4 hours on a Saturday in April outside Star Market in Belmont, handing out lists of the shelter's needed items, and raising awareness. Customers bought the items while they shopped and dropped them off as they left. We bagged the items and piled them in 2 cars (my SUV and a station wagon), both stuffed to the gills, and delivered the non-perishables, along with \$377 in donations.. Y2Y was again thrilled with our results.



Walk for Hunger: For close to 20 years, the first Sunday in May finds a group of 25 BHS students staffing the checkpoint at the Cambridge Boat House. Because BHS has a storied history of being incredible "cheerers", encouraging the walkers as they approach the checkpoint, the Project Bread checkpoint leaders requested that we spend most of our 5 ½ hour shift doing just that. There were a few students who participated in stamping walk maps and providing water to the walkers, but most of the time was spent cheering, clapping, and high-fiving the grinning walkers, energizing them for the last 6 miles!

Campus Cleanup: Sponsored by the Boys and Girls Rugby coaches, many students participated in a now-annual Saturday morning cleanup around the pond and the BHS campus, in general.

Asian-American Club's Evening: This year's event was a fundraiser for UNICEF, raising approximately \$500.

Kiss 'Em Goodbye: The Leadership Team continued to lead this farewell to the seniors, as a benefit for girls education in South Sudan through She's the First, which works in the developing world. Parents, students, and staff ordered small bags of Hershey kisses for their children and their BHS friends. Students delivered the candy during the week of senior classes. Once again, donations made it possible for every senior to receive at least one bag of kisses. With the proceeds and a donation from the Belmontian Club, over \$1000 was sent to this organization, allowing BHS for the next year to once again sponsor and receive updates on South Sudanese girls. We were delighted to hear of the graduation of the two South Sudanese female "scholars" who have been receiving our support for the past few years. (Aluel is on the left, Grace on the right; pictures from last year.)



Senior Service Day: This annual day of service was held, as always, during Senior Week, with about 120 enthusiastic seniors performing service at area locations—from Community Farms in Waltham and Belmont Acres, to Bristol Lodge (soup kitchen of Middlesex Human Service Agency), along with beautification and projects at BHS, Burbank, Wellington, and Chenery. Also benefiting from the efforts of the seniors were Habitat, the Garden Club (at the Woodland Garden around the perimeter of the library parking lot), and the Rec Department, for whom students painted walls at Town Field. Finally, students shot footage of the event for the Belmont Media Center. The service was preceded by breakfast and the distribution of Senior Service Day T-shirts in the cafeteria. Breakfast is provided solely through donations from many area merchants—Starbucks, Quebrada, Iggy's, Linda's Donuts, Russo's, Stop & Shops (Pleasant St & Watertown), Star Market, and Wegmans. The Seniors Officers did a phenomenal job with the sign up (and show up) process.

Presidential Awards: The President's Volunteer Service Awards are presented to students who perform at least 100 hours of service in a 12 month period. This year, 110 BHS students earned the award. At the middle school level, where the award criterion is 50 hours of service, 9 Chenery students were recipients.

Year-long Activities

Tutoring: Throughout the year BHS students are matched with students system-wide for tutoring and relationship-building. This year has had the most requests for tutors, and we were able to provide a tutor for every student in every grade that was requested.

Translating: This year, the Burbank PTO relied on our students to translate newsletters about events into Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Russian, and Turkish.

PTO, School, and Foundation for Belmont Education Activities: We frequently provide help for activities at the various schools, from Math Nights and book fairs, to multicultural events and childcare at PTO meetings. Assistance is also given to the FBE (the Scharfman run, spelling bee, spring gala, and administrative help during the year).

Belmont Center Business Association: Our students work at Turn on the Town in December, the Spring Egg Hunt in March, and Town Day in May.

Faculty Support for Charitable Causes: Staff members continue to contribute to three causes--breast cancer and hunger alleviation, the METCO Support Fund. Approximately \$300 were raised for the American Cancer Society, Project Bread, and the METCO Support Fund.

PALS: Named by students in the club years ago, PALS (People All Love Smiles) is a joint venture of LABBB and BHS. Because the LABBB students in the last three years have been older and transitioning to the workplace, our meetings were fewer and focused on service to the community. The club worked on various things, from making blankets for an animal shelter, to planting flowers for the residents at Belmont Manor, and wrapping holiday gifts for needy students.

Working to Help the Homeless: This club plans and implements activities related to homelessness and hunger. The students start the year with a homelessness-awareness campaign. They then sponsor a toiletries drive for the Middlesex Human Service Agency and hold both a food drive at Star Market and a coffeehouse to benefit the Y2Y youth shelter. In addition we go to Rosie's Place to prepare, serve, and clean up after brunch for the guests (See above).

Belmontian Club: This is the general community service club at the high school. Meeting in the evening to allow athletes and students in other extracurricular activities to participate, the club is the backbone of many school-wide service activities at BHS. The students plan and implement many school service activities including the many breast cancer and Cradles to Crayons pajama events, along with snowflakes. Members also participate in the many service opportunities which are offered at BHS. This year, the club donated \$500 in surplus funds to She's the First (see Kiss 'Em Goodbye) and chose 3 new Kiva recipients (for higher education) to reinvest our past repaid loans.

UNICEF Club: This club supports UNICEF, and members teach middle school children about needs of children globally. The BHS students joined the younger students in trick-or-treating for UNICEF, and ran a Family Fun Night (with educational activities) at the middle school.

Other clubs: Students with particular passions have started clubs with service in mind. They include DIY, Garden and Food Justice Club (in its 4th year: raises produce for the Belmont Food Pantry in raised beds near the baseball field), Amnesty International (a long standing BHS club focusing on human rights), Belmont Red Cross, Environmental Activism and Justice, Let Girls Learn, Ocean Protection, Rare Disease Club, Social Justice.Civil Leadership, Students for Soldiers, Walk for Hunger clubs, and many others .

Athletic Teams: From the collection of food by the basketball teams and a campus cleanup spearheaded by the rugby teams, to decorating the graves of veterans with American flags and the girls' basketball team assisting children in the gym at the MLK Breakfast, community service activities have become part of athletics.