

Daily Breeze



BRAD GRAYSON/DAILY BREEZE

Torrance students wave to the song "Give A Little Bit," performed Thursday by Roger Hodgson, singer and composer of the band Supertramp.

\$100,000 is raised for tsunami relief

TORRANCE: Students are honored for donating funds that will be used by UNICEF to assist victims.

By Scott Martindale
DAILY BREEZE

Jaymee Gabio's artwork has been emblazoned on hundreds of T-shirts. Her picture of six children holding hands became the visual focal point of a campaign by Torrance Unified School District students to raise money for victims of December's Asian tsunami.

The 7-year-old was too shy to brag Thursday but it was obvious how she felt about

her work, which helped raise \$100,000 for the relief effort.

"Very special," said the modest young artist, who helped inspire students at the district's 31 schools.

Student representatives from each school were honored for their efforts Thursday at an Edison Elementary School awards ceremony, which featured a performance by singer-composer Roger Hodgson of Supertramp fame.

"There was a clear desire on the part of the students to participate, and they came through beautifully," said Assistant Superintendent John Schmitt.

The tsunami relief project, called Tor-

rance Assisting Suffering Kids, began in February with elementary, middle and high school students engaged in a variety of fund-raising projects, from T-shirt sales and coin collecting to walkathons and letter-writing to family and friends.

"They've gotten a tremendous amount of experience out of this," said Kati Krumpke, principal of Edison Elementary.

The funds were presented to UNICEF, a United Nations children's agency providing ongoing relief to tsunami survivors.

One of UNICEF's main goals is to help villages "get normal" — in other words, to send children to school, Rhoda Makoff of

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TSUNAMI: Torrance students give \$100,000 to help victims

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the U.S. Fund for UNICEF told students at the ceremony.

The students' \$100,000 check was joined by a \$400,000 donation from the Best Western hotel chain. The Torrance Rotary Club also announced a \$1,000 contribution to UNICEF.

More than \$9 million has been raised nationally by students for tsunami relief, including \$5 million from the Cartoon Network's "Kids Help Out" tsunami relief program, which partnered with Torrance Unified to encourage stu-

dent participation in the district's fund-raiser.

"I am proud to be among people who have already learned a valuable life lesson," said Kimi Giles, a senior at South High School in Torrance.

In March, the Los Angeles Unified School District wrapped up a similar tsunami relief program, raising \$255,000.

The images of devastation in Southeast Asia might have compelled students to do their part, said Kristen Muha, an eighth-grader at Casimir Middle School in Torrance.

"Usually we're not excited about anything," said Kristen, student council president. "But after all the visuals (of the tsunami's impact), we got inspired to help out."

Jaymee's T-shirt design also spurred the success of the campaign. The T-shirts, which sold for \$5, were so popular that schools often ran out and had to replenish their supplies from the school district office, said Natalie Dickinson, a fifth-grader at Edison Elementary and publicity director for the student council.

"I would want to do this again," she said.