

PALATINE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS SHOW SUPPORT FOR CLASSMATE'S FAMILY AFTER TRAGIC LOSS



These blue donation jars with "Buckets for Brad" written on them were passed around school for four days. More than \$10,000 was collected for the Walls family.

When an unexpected tragic event struck a Palatine High School senior's family, several students and Palatine community members showed their support through fundraising efforts for the family.

Palatine High School senior Brad Wall's father unexpectedly passed away on Dec. 8, and his friends rallied with the PHS community to raise more than \$10,000 in four days to help the family pay for medical bills and funeral services. Those efforts did not include additional funds raised throughout the Palatine community.

"After Brad's dad passed away, we were in kind of shock. He's such a good friend of ours" said Palatine High School senior Brian Keough. "Ryan Gronwick (Palatine High School senior) mentioned we should do a fundraiser for Brad and his family."

The Walls family has encountered a series of hardships throughout the years, and now is faced with the unexpected death of their father Barry Keith "Brick" Walls. Keough and Gronwick, along with fellow Palatine students Alex Nawrot, Anthony Depersia, Cody Oversen, Ben Nzerem, Ian Holst, and Andrew Neilsen, were the students who got the efforts started.

"Once we got the ball rolling, next thing we knew we had blue donation buckets going around in school and the outpouring of donations was incredible," Keough said. "People were giving without hesitation, and we didn't know who many of the donations came from. People were handing over \$20 without thinking twice about it."

The community also became involved. Photo's Hotdogs, 301 N. Northwest Highway,

donated \$1100, which represented the amount of money they received from orders Dec. 12-14. Hot Dog Richies, 220 N. Northwest Highway, donated a portion of their sales from Dec. 15-16. Additionally, Pizza Bella, 100 W. Northwest Highway, is donating a percentage of their sales each night for an entire week. Community members can also make donations through Chase Bank to Dawn M. Walls, Brad's mother.

"A lot of Palatine High School kids come here for lunch, and Brad is one that comes pretty regularly," said Tony DeFilippis, owner of Pizza Bella. "One of Brad's friends told me the family didn't have enough money for services, and whatever my sales are at the end of the night, I am giving a portion to the family. I truly thought what the students did was amazing. These kids are well on their way to learning that giving is more important than receiving."

Other ways students organized fundraising efforts was at the boys' basketball game on Dec. 14. Abt Electronics donated a 43-inch television to be raffled at the game. More than \$2,000 was raised that evening in honor of the Walls family.

Just before the world mourned the school shooting in Newtown, Conn., a Schaumburg High School student Mikas Tibebu lost his life in a hit and run accident the prior weekend. Palatine High School social studies teachers, Mark Johnson, said the students' efforts are refreshing in light of both local and national tragedies. Brad, who Johnson said seemed overwhelmed by the community support, still made sure he gave back to the local community. He took a portion of money donated to his family, and contributed it to a fund in Tibebu's name.

"You couple all this with the events that happened in Connecticut last week, and we saw polar-opposite actions from humans, which was a nice balance to a really awful day," Johnson said. "The outpouring was amazing."

PALATINE HIGH SCHOOL CHEMISTRY OF FOODS STUDENTS' FIRST RESTAURANT DAY



Junior Alex Ayala sorts toppings for the pizza.

More than 60 students enrolled in Palatine High School's Chemistry of Foods class were working together to assemble their first large order of personal deep-dish pizzas since the school year started. Some rolled the dough, others were in charge of sauce and toppings, and with a lot of teamwork, they completed more than 120 orders for Palatine High School faculty and staff on Oct. 4.

With the assistance of teachers Erika Varela, Mark Langer, and Robert Heitz, and Palatine based Pizza Bella pizzeria owner Tony DeFilippis, students received a first-hand experience of what it's like to be in a restaurant kitchen.



Emily Seidl and Tony DeFilippis of Palatine's Pizza Bella thin pizza sauce with a little water.

"The best part of this class is that the students get real-world experience running a restaurant even though it's still within the school environment so they have room to make mistakes," Varela said. "Many students comment that this is the hardest they have ever worked in a class and many teachers comment that this is the hardest they've ever seen their kids work in a class."

The class, which combines a traditional cooking class with chemistry, provides

students with a well-rounded learning experience about the food preparation, the industry, and cooking. As a dual-credit course with William Rainey Harper College, students have the opportunity to study and test for their food safety and sanitation certification at the high school.

“I love seeing the kids get to learn chemistry and be able to apply it, because the biggest question they have is always, ‘when am I going to use this,’” Heitz said. “They jump into using chemistry right away.”



Pizza Bella owner Tony DeFilippis (center) helps juniors Chan Han (left) and Chaka Kelly (right) roll pizza dough.

Langer agreed that not only is the work experience great for students, it gives them a relatable way to look at chemistry.

“I like giving the real-world application to chemistry,” Langer said. “This is something kids deal with everyday – food.”



Tahkyra Whitaker and Karlee Darow chop vegetables for side salads that came with each person’s order. Orders were \$6 each, and included a pizza, salad, dessert, and drink.

Each quarter, the class completes two food events, which doesn’t necessarily mean

they are restaurants. Varela said the first restaurant the class hosts is a carry out because it allows for more focus on food preparation without worrying about turning a classroom into a restaurant. In the future, students complete a sit down meal where staff members can sit down and have lunch.

“We try to get two meals in per quarter, and that can be tough during the first quarter because students are busy getting their food safety and sanitation certification program, which is new this year,” Varela said. “Students earn dual-credit with Harper College when they successfully complete the course and pass their certification.”



Frederico Patino, junior, sorts through customer orders the day before the class hosted the restaurant day.

If students do not pass their certification the first time through, they have an opportunity to continue the course and retake their certification test up to two times. If they haven't passed the test the second time, they will have to take the training again. Varela said it's rare for a student not to pass the certification test.

DeFilippis, who spoke to students about sanitation, entrepreneurship, and owning his own business, said it was great to help students learn about what it's like in the workplace.

“The students got hands-on experience making deep-dish pizzas, and it benefits the students because they are being hands-on and seeing what it's like in the workplace, and benefitting from know what can come in their future.”

Watch the kids in action below!