

Souhegan High Ethics Forum Prepares For Benefit Concert

Published: Thursday, Apr. 30, 2009

Whoever says teenagers are lazy, ignorant, Internet-crazed adolescents who contribute nothing to society is sadly mistaken.

The Souhegan High School Ethics Forum, a group of students dedicated to making an annual local, national or global change in their community, proves that motivated teenagers can make a significant difference in the world around them.

The Ethics Forum is composed of about 20 upperclassmen who meet twice a week to discuss, organize and plan fundraisers and events to raise money for a cause of their choice. The group is a branch of the Ethics Seminar, a course taught to seniors by Chris Brooks and Amy Pham.

“The seminar is the course that digs deeply into ethical theory and discussion,” said Brooks, who also is the adviser of the Ethics Forum. “. . . Students then take those lessons and apply them in real-life situations throughout the community with the end goal of making the situations and conditions of those around us better.”

The link between the course and the Ethics Forum is clearly seen by the students involved. Shannon Sickler, a senior who has taken the lead in Ethics Forum this year, said about the course, “The knowledge we gain is applied to something greater than schoolwork.”

In the fall, the group decided to raise funds for two organizations throughout the school year. The first was Schools for Salone, an organization that builds schools in the impoverished country of Sierra Leone, Africa, and the second was UNICEF, to support the rehabilitation of child soldiers.

Organizing a group of more than 20 students with busy schedules can be a tiring task, but the dedication of a handful of students makes it possible. “Ethics Forum faces and overcomes challenges every day,” Sickler said. “We disagree and discuss, but our discussions lead to the best outcome in the end.”

Fundraisers such as a Valentine’s Day carnations sale, a St. Patrick’s Day raffle and profit percentages from Coldstone Creamery and Uno’s have not only successfully raised funds, but also spread the word about the group.

The Ethics Forum also received a grant for \$1,000 from Youth Venture, an organization that donates seed money to groups of young change makers, enabling them to get their organization off the ground immediately.

All of the donations that the Ethics Forum has received are helping to fund the Rock to Read benefit concert, which will be held June 5 at the Hampshire Dome. Music by The Mydas Ascension, Silent Distortion, The Asthmatics, Quick Decision, The Retakes and Offsuit will be performed. All profits will go toward Schools for Salone and UNICEF.

“A concert is a great way to bring the school and surrounding communities together,” Sickler said. “It represents our dedication and drive to make our goal happen.”

Kristin Leffler is a junior at Souhegan High School in Amherst.