

Del Mar Heights students raise \$2,300 for Nick's Picks

After weeks of saving up allowances and selling lemonade, oranges and home-baked goods, students at Del Mar Heights raised \$1,150 for Nick's Picks, a Del Mar charity founded by 16-year-old Nick Wallace.

Wallace created Nick's Picks in 2012 after a lengthy hospital stay for a liver transplant. His charity gives hospitalized children backpacks filled with Wallace's personal selection of items that helped him keep up his spirits during his own hospital recovery—hence, Nick's picks.

The funds, matched by the Del Mar Heights PTA, totaled \$2,300 and paid for 46 bright blue backpacks, filled with toys, books and other entertaining goodies. During a school assembly on March 18, students presented Wallace and his sister Lexie with the backpacks, which they had assembled that week, along with dozens of hand-drawn get-well notes to be distributed to hospitalized children dealing with chronic illnesses.

"It feels nice to help other people," said Danny Dao, an 11-year-old sixth-grader who spent his recess assembling backpacks and writing notes in the school library.

Carlin Smith, a seven-year-old in second grade who also came to help, said, "I gave \$10 out of my allowance because I want to help kids in the hospital to get better."

The effort was designed to teach students at Del Mar Heights about the value of giving, said Susanne Chakravarty, chair of the Heights Cares Program that spearheaded the effort, now in its second year. "Last year, the PTA bought 20 backpacks and the kids put them together," Chakravarty said. "This year, we wanted to make it a broader effort so that the kids can do the fundraising themselves."

It paid off. Del Mar Heights students were able to raise more money on their own than the PTA donated last year, more than doubling the number of backpacks to 46 this year.

For photos online, visit www.delmartimes.net.



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Nick's Picks founder Nick Wallace, Lexie Wallace, Del Mar Heights Principal Wendy Wardlow and students with 46 full backpacks.



Del Mar Heights students preparing backpacks for donation.

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