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## Harrington Middle School students offer ideas for nonprofits to expand impact in community

The Giving Cycle organization partnered with the school to have middle school students commit themselves to a lifetime of giving.



Brothers and Mt. Laurel students Jevon Torres, age 14, left, and Devin Torres, age 11, hold up a check after this week's Giving Cycle Assembly at Harrington Middle School. Giving Cycle, founded by the Torres brothers, donated \$500 to six local nonprofits that students at Harrington had researched.

It was all about giving back to the community at Harrington Middle School this week when teams of seventh-grade students gave presentations on ways to enhance the reach of local nonprofits as part of the students' work with the Giving Cycle organization.

Giving Cycle, founded by Mt. Laurel brothers Jevon, 14, and Devin Torres, 11, works with middle school students to raise awareness about the need for philanthropy in the students' local communities and have students commit themselves to a lifetime of giving before high school.

During the past several months, Harrington teacher Kristy Curtis and the students of her Challenge-Based Learning elective partnered with Giving Cycle and integrated its mission into classroom activities by having students research local non-profits and identify opportunities for those non-profits to have a greater impact in the community.

As a culmination of their work, the students presented their ideas this week in front of fellow students, parents, school administrators, Giving Cycle leadership and representatives from the students chosen nonprofits.

This year, nonprofits students chose included the Alliance for Living Ocean, The Food Trust, the NJ Tree Foundation, the Animal Welfare Association, The Joy of Sox and the Red Cross of Southwest New Jersey.

Whether it was having nonprofits improve their website, create smart phone applications, spend more on advertising or even just apply as a vendor at local fall festivals, students presented concrete strategies for how their chosen nonprofits could better serve their causes.

“I think it’s really important we inspire kids our age to be civically engaged and socially conscious,” Jevon said. “As we say in our Giving Cycle Pledge, it’s a lifetime of giving, and those are the kind of people that we need in our generation.”

Once the students finished their presentations, the Torres brothers presented representatives from each of the nonprofits with a \$500 check to the help the nonprofits continue with their missions.

“It’s great that we had all six non-profits in attendance so they could see all the great ideas. This is the first time that we saw the presentations as well, and I thought they were incredible,” Jevon said.

Devin echoed his brother’s sentiments, and said they were happy to continue encouraging kids in middle school and exposing them to philanthropy.

“It’s so everyone can get that spirit of giving,” Devin said.

Harrington Principal Kathleen Haines also praised the work of the students, describing the day’s assembly and presentations as one of

the best parts of the school year.

“These are the ways that we try to reach out to the community and try help out,” Haines said. “I’ll be very honest with you—it really does change your life. You really do think differently about how to do the right thing.”