

Alton High School students go in for Guatemalans

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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GODFREY – Students from Sharon Ferree's food sciences class at Alton High School have used skills they have learned in the classroom to benefit people thousands of miles away.

On Friday morning, bright and early at 8:30 a.m., around a dozen students from the class presented a large ceremonial check for \$550 to Mustard Seed Peace Project Executive Director, Teresa Cranmer. That money will be used for the logistics, planning and execution of the project's main goal, which is to bring clean water to poor rural areas of Guatemala. Cranmer said the money raised by the students through a variety of projects, including selling chocolate eggs at Easter, hosting a bake sale and inviting people to take part in a hunger banquet to demonstrate the socio-economic conditions leading millions across the world to be in need, despite food being plentiful and available.

“It's a warm feeling to help them have clean water,” Jacqueline Buettner, who designed the over-sized ceremonial check said about presenting it. “To us that's something normal, but to them it's a really big deal. I'm really proud of everyone who helped.”

Cranmer said many people in the poor areas of Guatemala where she goes were greatly affected by years of civil war in the nation. She said many people in the village are subsistence farmers living on parcels of land bestowed to them by the government. Many of them do not have enough to make any real basic income, and use the land they have to sustain themselves, giving what little surplus does exist to the betterment of the community.

Because of the poor quality of water, which in some cases has to be walked to the village over a distance of several kilometers, many of the people in the area turn to soda for their thirst and overall hydration. This leads to disastrous effects.

“There was once a little girl there who wasn't talking and didn't want to play with the other kids,” Cranmer said. “She had abscesses across her entire mouth, and several rotting teeth. It's because it's easier for them to get soda than clean water.”

As of now, Cranmer said there is not a set time the Mustard Seed Peace Project will be returning to Guatemala to continue its mission to bring these people clean water in an efficient fashion, but said it would likely occur later this summer.