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Coffee Sales Teach FR Students Social Responsibility

Jeff Poole

<http://www.franklinregional.k12.pa.us>

Over the past few years, the 8th grade class at Franklin Regional Middle School has sold shade-grown organic coffee to benefit Nicaraguan coffee growers. This sale has guaranteed the farmers a fair trade price for their coffee. The profits from the coffee sales have supported many local and international programs. The main focus of the project has been to help as many different people as possible.

Over the years, the students have donated almost \$3,000 to the Holiday Help Program a Middle School project put together by the counselors to help local families at holiday time. More than \$1,500 has been sent to a school in Nicaragua called “Yo Puedo” (I can). This school has been supported by many different organizations, but Franklin Regional Middle School has been given a place of honor on their wall where there is a plaque thanking us for our support. Many other donations have been made to various organizations around the world, including some in Africa and Haiti.

When I first heard about the coffee farmers whose coffee we are selling, it was because they made news in the local paper in Granada Nicaragua where I was living at the time. The paper said how they could not sell their coffee because it was too hard to get it to market. Because of this, their children were starving to death and several had already died. Donna Tabor, a Pittsburgh native, recently honored in Washington, D.C. as a citizen ambassador found a way with the help of Building New Hope to get the coffee here. We recently received a letter from Building New Hope thanking us for our participation in the coffee sales. The letter states: “Once again, you have done an outstanding job, surpassing all other schools and service groups in your coffee sales! Your continued support over these past years has meant so much in the lives of the coffee farmers and their families in Nicaragua. You have made it possible for them to expand their school, further develop their community and ensure their livelihood. It is a privilege and a pleasure to work with you.”

These kinds of projects are so important to our students. Teaching them to be global citizens is an important part of growing up. We would like to thank the community for their support with this project.

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