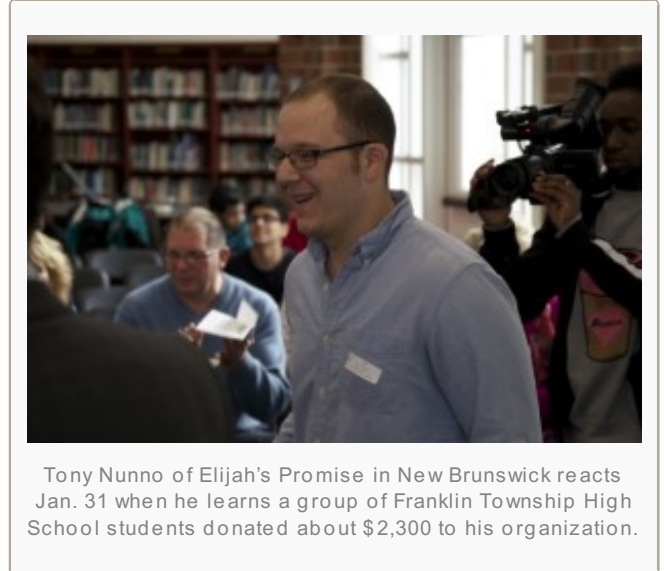


Franklin High School Business Psych Class Learns The Value Of Philanthropy

More than \$4,400 in [grants](#) was awarded to three local charities Jan. 31 by students in a Franklin High School business psychology class.

The students took part in a 10-week program run by Main Street Philanthropy, an organization comprised of financial planners which is dedicated to teaching students the value of philanthropic investing.

Mendham resident Yale Levey, owner of Next Generation Wealth Planning and a Main Street Philanthropy co-founder and “Ambassador,” convinced high school business psychology teacher Ron Richter to propose the program for his students. He did, the Board of Education agreed, and 10 weeks later, Richter’s students presented checks to representatives from the Franklin Township Food Bank, New Brunswick-based Elijah’s Promise and The Valerie Fund.



The bulk of the funding was provided by Christopher Johnson, CEO of Hollister Construction Services of Parsippany, but the students also raised about \$800 on their own, Richter said.

During the course, the students were divided into five teams determined by their shared passions. They looked at various charities, studied their financial reports and made cold calls to the organization’s administration to find out more about them.

The program helped the students “learn to work as a team, become comfortable with getting up and speaking and learn to cold-call charities,” Richter said.

“They got to understand what it means to give,” he said.

Levey said that as a financial adviser, “my philosophy is your wealth is more than your money. There’s also a social dimension.”

“By putting philanthropy and giving at the center, you could do a whole bunch of revolutionary and inspirational things in terms of making the world better,” he said. Levey said the Franklin Township program was the first in New Jersey.

Several of the students were called upon to give their impressions of the program and the process they followed in choosing the charities to which they donated.

Stephanie Tu said that the program allowed her to “see how charities work and how they function.”

“Now I see that one person can make a difference and change the world,” she said.

The program “gave me insight as to what I was passionate about,” said Neha Hinduja.

Alexis Chyz said that “from the first day, I couldn’t really decide what problem I wanted to fix. That surprised me because I thought I already knew what I wanted to do.”

“That opened up my mind that I care about everything, and everyone else should, too,” she said.

The charities’ representatives thanked the students, and told them the donations would make a difference in their work.

“Having you kids be engaged and be enthusiastic means almost as much to me as the check,” said Frank Hasner, executive director of the Franklin Township Food Bank. The students gave the food bank \$437.

Barry Kirschner, executive director of The Valerie Fund – a charity that provides support and comprehensive health care for children with cancer and blood disorders – said the \$1,729 his group received will allow it “do things in the hospitals that we ordinarily couldn’t do. We can’t do what we do without help from the community.”

Tony Nunno, volunteer and donations coordinator for Elijah’s Promise, seemed the most surprised by the group’s donation of \$2,288 to his organization.

“This is going to go a long, long way,” he said. “\$2,300 is going to feed a lot of people.”

The ceremony also served as a “graduation” ceremony for the students in the class, each of whom received a certificate and a bag of small gifts.

Richter said he’s looking for a sponsor to re-run the program in the spring.

“The question is, where do we get the money?” he said.