

**THE DENAN PROJECT  
P.O. Box 543  
Woodbury, CT 06798  
www.thedenanproject.com**

**For Immediate Release/November 30, 2006**

**Bethlehem, Woodbury Schools Help  
Locally Run Denan Project  
Help Poor Community in Ethiopia**

*Caption for Photo 1, children with globe:*

**Bethlehem Elementary School fifth-graders and student-council members Cheryl Clemens, Brooke Banhan, Allie Rescsanski, and Thomas Rozak show off the globe students used to collect loose change for The Denan Project.**

*Caption for Photo 2, children with letters and cards:*

**Students at the Woodbury Middle school sent thank-you cards and letters to U.S. soldiers stationed in Ethiopia who were to make repairs to the free hospital serving the people of Denan. Here, fourth grade students and, behind them, left to right. Teacher Debbie Geddes and Denan Project representatives Kathy Owens and Brittany Kaminski.**

November 30, 2006, Woodbury – This fall, students in the Bethlehem Elementary School pooled their money to give \$214.70 to The Denan Project, the Woodbury-area nonprofit group that is funding a hospital and a water pipeline in the desperately poor, drought-stricken community of Denan, Ethiopia. A poster in the school lobby said: “Your change can help bring change for the people of Denan,” and over the months the children put their dimes and quarters into a hole in a globe marked with the bold handwritten words “Bethlehem” and “Denan.” Woodbury resident and Denan Project representative Walt Dierks, accepting the donation, said that “every penny the children raised will help kids have a meal, see a doctor, and drink clean water in a faraway place called Denan.”

In Woodbury, students at the Middle School had a different approach. Prior to their summer vacation, they wrote cards and letters to American troops stationed in Ethiopia who had offered to help make repairs to Denan Hospital. Coordinating the effort was Woodbury’s Nonnewaug High School student

Brittany Kaminski, the school's representative on The Denan Project, as well as a team of NHS students. The students received a thank-you message from Paul J Vandenberg, Officer in Charge, CJ-34 Engineer Division, Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA): “Wow, some great thought and effort went into all of the wonderful cards and letters! I have personally been to Denan and have seen the conditions - really sad. . . Thanks again for sending the package of cards!”

NHS students, under the direction of art department teacher Leeza Desjardins, also took part in a poster-design contest focusing on the progress made in Denan. The winner of the contest was Lauren Wirth, with runner-up recognition going to Corinne DeJoseph, Kaitlin Losee, and Gabrielle Nurnberger. Like the Denan Project logo designed last year by NHS senior Rachelle Tobin, the new posters will be used at fund-raising events and will eventually be permanently exhibited in the hospital in Denan. In September, three NHS seniors also helped raise money at a Denan Project fund-raising event at Oliva restaurant in New Preston: Brittany Kaminski, Caroline Donnarumma, and Hayley Love. In June, Brittany and Hayley had been among the NHS delegates who went to Hartford to receive the Challenge to Educational Citizenship Award from the State Student Advisory Council on Education and the Commissioner of Education, given to NHS for its work for Denan.

Now, students and teachers at NHS are planning to hold a “battle of the bands” fundraising concert early in the new year with the goal of raising even more than the \$1,500 raised last year by a similar concert. Meanwhile, the Nonnewaug PTO is working with representatives from The Denan Project to co-sponsor a March 24, 2007 “Night for Denan Concert” that will try to match or beat the \$10,000 raised at the joint PTO-Denan concert last March. This major fund-raiser will feature not only student bands and singing groups but outside performers and groups to be announced early in 2007.

The Denan Project was founded by a small group of Woodbury and Roxbury residents in 2003 to bring medical help to the small community of Denan, in eastern Ethiopia. The group raised money to build a free medical clinic by speaking to friends and neighbors and to church and civic organizations. Its clinic opened in April 2004 with one full-time doctor. As more funds were raised, the clinic became a 29-room hospital with two paid doctors and 17 paid staffers. With funds from a special donor, the Denan Project was able to buy a desperately needed ambulance (which has the NHS-student-designed logo on its side panel). The Denan hospital offers the only free medical care in the Ogaden, a desperately poor region with a population of 4 million, and has served more than 25,000 patients since 2004.

The Denan Project has also raised funds to bring potable water to Denan via a pipeline from bore holes nine miles away. Thirteen stations along the line provide watering points for people in the Denan area; one of these has been named after Nonnewaug High School; others were paid for by Rotary clubs from various towns in Connecticut, including the Tribury, Watertown, and Naugatuck clubs, as well as by Rotary clubs from Florida and Colorado. Working with the Ethiopian government, the Denan Project has also provided agricultural training for volunteers from Denan who learned about the use of new drought-resistant

seeds and soil and water management appropriate to the Ogaden's dry, harsh conditions. In the near future, the Denan Project may also be able to provide a school for the children of Denan; for now, it has received a \$3,000 donation to set up a scholarship program for promising Denan students to be sent to school in Gode, the regional capitol.

Meanwhile, back in Woodbury, the ongoing situation in Denan has been integrated into the NHS junior year social studies curriculum as part of a focus on Africa. Students continue to come up with ideas to help the people of Denan, from a Holiday tag sale to a penny-collection contest, with all money raised to go to a small community halfway around the world that has caught their interest and their concern.

Contact:

Eileen Denver or Duncan Stephens:

26 Judson Ave., Woodbury 06798; 203-266-4009;

[Edenver01@Earthlink.Net](mailto:Edenver01@Earthlink.Net); [Dstephens02@Earthlink.Net](mailto:Dstephens02@Earthlink.Net)