



East Richland Christian Schools

Elem. #740-695-2005 * Middle School #740-695-2281 * HS #740-695-2279

Senior Class Mission Trip May 7-13, 2024

When most people think of Orlando, FL, they don't think of poverty and a huge, homeless population. They think of warm weather, theme parks, and family fun. It's "the happiest place on earth," right? However, spending several days in Orlando, our seven high school seniors, Mrs. Green, Mr. McKinley and Mrs. Garrett found it to be an eye-opener. They worked with Serve Orlando, which coordinated service projects for our group at the following places:

- **Clean the World Foundation, Inc.** has a two-part mission: Reduce the waste created by discarded soap and shampoo products and prevent the millions of deaths caused by hygiene-related illnesses every year. Clean the World has an innovative program: Collect the millions of pounds of hotel soap that guests leave behind every year, recycle them through a sanitization process, then distribute the repurposed soap worldwide and to domestic homeless shelters. Our group was able to sort 2,000 lbs. of soap and shampoo containers during their time with them.
- **Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida** is an organization that collects, stores, and distributes donated food to more than 550 feeding partners in six Central Florida counties. Last year, the food bank distributed 56 million meals to partner programs such as food pantries, soup kitchens, women's shelters, senior centers, day care centers, and Kids Cafes. The day our group visited Second Harvest, they had frozen meat to organize. They separated the meat into bins according to "poultry," "pork," "precooked," etc, and finished ahead of the time schedule and were told they had organized nearly 8,000 lbs. of meat.
- **Straight Street, Inc.** is an urban mission that promotes the idea that we must exist to help each other see ourselves as God sees us. This ministry touched the hearts of our students more than any other. This is a very different kind of food kitchen in that the "guests" come in and sit at tables in the shade under canopies (it was 101 degrees) and are served their dinner plates restaurant-style by the volunteers. It is one thing to hear about a homeless "population." It is entirely another thing to hand a glass of ice water or a plate of food to an individual, look into the person's eyes, smile at the person, and hear the "thank you" that most of them offer. Our group served 214 meals.
- **Orlando Children's Church** is a Christian outreach ministry for kids that services hundreds of families, bringing children into a safe environment for breakfast, play, Bible lessons, and crafts. Our group enjoyed playing soccer and basketball with the children, sitting at picnic tables playing board games with them, sharing the Bible lesson, and making the craft. They made Mother's Day gifts as Mother's Day was the following day.
- **The Christian Service Center** seeks to eradicate poverty through the provision of services and resources that foster hope, well-being, and empowerment. Our project for The Christian Service Center was two-fold. One group went out to clean the outside of the facility and lay fresh mulch. The other group made treat bags to be handed out at a street event this coming weekend. They filled over 200 bags with donated soda and candy.

Although they worked hard, all their energy was not spent on work. There was plenty of time for fun and fellowship. They went to the beach twice, played putt-putt, competed at Topgolf, and rode rides (including some pretty extreme rollercoasters) at Universal's Islands of Adventure. There are a number of beautiful parks in the area, and they enjoyed visiting a couple of them for mid-day refreshment. At night, they stayed at Serve Orlando's dormitories. They ate in their cafeteria and were served wonderful meals. They had full breakfasts and dinners, but prepared sack lunches to take "on the job." They also ate out several times, especially during travel, including a special meal at the Hard Rock Café. Everyone participated in the work, play, and devotional times and overall our seniors and teachers had a blast!



Important Dates:

- May 14-17 — Senior Job Shadowing Week
- May 16 — Grades 1-6 Awards Programs
- May 17 — Band and Choir Concert 7 pm
- May 20 — Seniors Last Day of School
- May 20 — 9th-12th Awards 1pm
- May 20 — 7th/8th Awards, and 8th Grade Graduation 6:30pm
- May 21 — PS3 Memorial Park Trip
- May 21 — Kindergarten Graduation 6:30 pm
- May 22 — PS4 Memorial Park Trip
- May 23 — Last Day of School
- May 24 — Teacher Work Day
- May 25 — Senior Graduation 1 pm

Finance Reminders:

Please make sure to check your FACTS account to stay current with your lunch and incidental charges. Just a reminder that all report cards will be held at the end of the year for any family with an outstanding account. No transcripts or academic records will be released until outstanding accounts are paid.

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Luke 6:38

