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School kids help Katrina victims

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Spring Break is usually a time of revelry and fun for most kids.

However, a group of students from The Kew-Forest School at 119-17 Union Turnpike in Forest Hills utilized their Spring Break this year to give back to the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Coordinated through a program called Curriculum Initiative and organized by Bill Mena, the Director of Student Activities at Kew-Forest, the group consisted of 11 students, 1 family member and math teacher David Wise.

"It took me about a second to say yes [to the trip]," Wise told *The Queens Courier*. "A school like this should be doing community service."

And it was exactly that, in its purest form, as the students paid all trip expenses, except the airfare.

"There was no carrot dangled," said



Photo courtesy the Kew-Forest School

Students from the Kew-Forest School in Forest Hills went to Louisiana on Spring Break to help in the clean-up of the hurricane-ravaged area.

Wise. "This was done for its own sake - it was completely altruistic."

"I like helping people and engaging in activities aimed toward making humanity better," said senior Adam

Chetrit, who paid approximately \$150 for expenses associated with the trip.

In conjunction with students from schools in the Bronx and Manhattan, the group left New York on March 20

and headed to Louisiana for three days of volunteerism.

"We met with the president of Tulane University and went to a forum of survivors," said Wise. "We then went to a middle school and painted rooms, scraped the paint off a fence, and picked up garbage. The kids were bowled over by the devastation, and they felt they accomplished something."

"I felt a lot of empathy for the victims who were poor," said Chetrit.

Wise said that, inspired by their fellow students, many others have expressed interest in community service projects. The school intends to organize another trip to Louisiana sometime next year.

"There's an awful lot to be done," he said. "I'm hoping to do this again with the same kids and many additional."

"I definitely intend to go back, if not through school then with a different organization," said Chetrit.