



North
Cross
School

For Immediate Release

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North Cross School Students Tutor Local Refugees

Friday, February 1, 2013 (Roanoke, VA)—It would be almost impossible to imagine what it must be like to be forced to flee one’s home—to flee from war, to flee from persecution, to flee from the bleak future in one’s country and to arrive in a new one to face an uncertain future. For refugee children, an uncertain future has been made a little better, thanks to the efforts of a group of student tutors from North Cross School.

Students enrolled in the Horace G. Fralin Program for Global Studies at North Cross School were seeking community service opportunities to gain exposure to a broader international perspective. Following the lead of Global Studies Director, Robert Robillard, students travelled to local public schools including William Fleming High School and Jackson Middle School. Touched by what he saw, Vincent Arnold, a freshman, formed the Tutoring Club.

Arnold has taken charge, arranging tutoring sessions, recruiting volunteers, and handling the logistics to get his team where they need to be, prepared for their assignments. “I want to make this something that makes a difference, helps people, and continues to serve the needs of refugees, long after I’ve graduated from North Cross. What is amazing about the experience is the feeling you have when you end each session. You know you went to help them, yet you are the one to leave feeling enriched by the experience.”

Freshman Jim Card, and seniors Gussie Revercomb and Dani Jung have also joined Arnold’s team, and they are glad they did. “The students we tutored at Jackson were from a wide range of countries. I was helping a 7th grade girl from Nepal,” Card said. In many instances, their dramatic circumstances cut their educations short.

“I believe these kids are smart enough,” Card said. “They have been through a lot in their young lives, so it can be difficult to introduce them to a completely new way of life. We are basically there to make it easier to understand what they are learning and be right next to them when they don’t understand something.”

Many of the refugees the team tutors face language challenges. “English is kind of a universal language,” says Revercomb. “They all speak English well enough, although they seem to stick with basic words when describing things.”

Asked recently to participate in a Virginia Tech conference called "Cultivating Peace: A Symposium for Violence Prevention," Arnold led a five-person round-table presentation on "The Global Need for Girls' Education," which provided a forum for sharing first-hand experiences with tutoring refugees and research on the worldwide problem.

Robillard had a big smile on his face as he said, wryly, “Our Global Studies students are discovering Roanoke, though a diverse community, it is a very small cross-section of a great big global community. By exposing our students to other people from different countries, unfamiliar customs, and other economic models, we believe it will make them better prepared to succeed in the colleges they choose to attend and flourish in the careers they wish to pursue.”

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North Cross School is a college-preparatory day school grounded in a strong liberal arts and science curriculum combined with exceptional co-curricular programs. The academic program, from junior kindergarten through twelfth grade, prepares students to become responsible, successful citizens by encouraging them to explore their interests and develop their talents. The School is located at 4254 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA, 24018.