

HOMELESS AWARENESS LOCK-OUT AND FUNDRAISER 2015

by Andres (Andy) Feuerbacher '17

This past weekend Father Lopez Catholic High School was the site of an eye-opening and humbling experience, lasting from 8:00 pm Friday night to 7:00 am Saturday morning in the school courtyard, in the rain. I was lucky enough to be out in the wetness to bear witness to several student testimonies of the event.

To kick off this year's national and annual Catholic Schools Week, the Peace Jam club hosted the "Homeless Awareness Lock-Out and Fundraiser." The Lock-Out was fundamentally an opportunity to form a sense of empathy towards and an understanding of the day-to-day suffering of the homeless by sleeping with: a box, a blanket, a sleeping bag, and a sweatshirt, provided they raised the proper monetary amount required to use each item.

Sixty-two students came out to join in this experience and each brought a little something with them. Aside from the \$25 required at registration, each student likely brought with them a stereotype or expectation of what being homeless was like. I make no exaggeration when I say that each and every student who was attending for the first time was shocked. One eleventh grader, **Emily Edwards**, put it perfectly into perspective saying, *"They have to go through so much,"* and *"...I guess you don't really know until you experience it yourself."*

After the \$25 required to register, each donation goal reached equaled one small luxury: a \$60 total would give you a sweatshirt, \$70 a blanket, \$110 for a sleeping bag, and finally all three items for \$200 raised. There were a total of 30 sweatshirts, 21 blankets, and 14 sleeping bags used. When you do the math, that's quite a lot of money raised. Even better than the fact that this much money was raised, is the fact that all these items were donated to Halifax Urban Ministries to help homeless in the local area. The total amount raised by this event was \$4,522 and all of it will be donated to [Feeding Children Everywhere](#) and will stay in the Central Florida area.

Now although I'm sure all these students are very passionate about helping others, the ultimate motivator might have been the fifteen service hours promised to anyone staying the full eleven hours. I could be wrong though. We may have the next passionate Mother Theresa or the next caring Gandhi at Father Lopez Catholic High School. Either way, everything went to a good cause and some hearts were changed. Isn't that what really makes it worthwhile?

