

Middle school students raise money for charity and learn about the Holocaust

By Sallie Jones *Special to the Herald Union*



WIESBADEN, Germany - Students at Wiesbaden Middle School raised money for two nonprofit organizations by creating a quarter chain, and also took part in a Holocaust memorial walking tour of Wiesbaden in May.

While creating the quarter chain, both children and adults were down on their knees in the hallway laying coins onto the ground. Cries of, "look how many quarters I have," rang

down the length of the hallways. While teachers kept order, some students held buckets filled with nickels, dimes and colorful, crumpled bills.

The event benefited Free the Slaves, which is an organization that aims to abolish modern-day slavery. The other half of the proceeds will go to the American Red Cross, in aid of those displaced by the recent tragedy in Oklahoma. The National Junior Honor Society and the Junior Leadership students organized the event.

In addition, school officials took 140 eighth-grade students on a Holocaust memorial walking tour of Wiesbaden on May 24. The students had read "Night" by Elie Wiesel and the play version of "The Diary of Anne Frank," and had gained a keen interest in how the Holocaust affected their local community. Small groups followed a tour of the city, designed by their teachers, which included more than a dozen Stumbling Stones, brass markers placed in front of houses where victims lived, where and when they were deported and where and when they died. Each group visited the Jewish Exhibit in the Rathaus and learned some personal stories of local Jews after Kristallnacht. Groups stopped at the Old Synagogue Memorial and stood in reverence at the names on the wall.

A highlight of the tour was the Aktives Museum on Spiegelgasse in downtown Wiesbaden. Local volunteers talked to the students, parents and teachers about the fate of the Jewish residents of Wiesbaden during the Holocaust. German and American students got a deeper, more personal understanding of these tragic events and left with a commitment to remember and never let anything like this happen again.