



Mercy Focus on Haiti: Template for School Announcements about Fundraiser Dress-Down Day

The following template for school-wide announcements was shared with the Mercy community by Assumption High School (Louisville, Kentucky).

In 2019, the Global Outreach Club at Assumption High School held a dress-down fundraiser to raise money for Mercy Focus on Haiti. Instead of the typical announcement about the event, the school included a creative educational component. This helped the school raise over 40 percent more money than they typically would through a dress-down fundraiser, resulting in a check for over \$4,000 sent to Mercy Focus on Haiti. The timeline below is for a dress-down day occurring on a Friday.

Week before event

Hello, I'm (*student's name*) from the (*name of club / organization*) to tell you about something important happening a week from today! On (*date*), you can have a dress-down day for a minimum donation of \$3 to support relief efforts in Haiti. Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, and over half of the population lives on less than \$2.40 per month. Yes, over 50% live on less than \$2.40 per month, not per day. And things have gotten so much worse there in recent months because of political unrest. Blockades in the streets have prevented food and water from getting to starving people. So mark your calendar - remember to bring in at least \$3 to dress down for Haiti next Friday.

Monday before event

Sprinkle in the following three announcements with other daily announcements:

1. Students, faculty, and staff – We have had a big problem with the insulation inside the walls of the stairwell closest to the main office. Therefore, a maintenance crew will be arriving shortly to address the problem. We anticipate this being completed by the end of the lunch block. Therefore, all three floors of the main stairwell by the main office cannot be used today until last block. Please take a few minutes this morning to think about the best traffic pattern for you to follow to get from class to class without using this stairwell until last block today. Also, classrooms located near that stairwell will most likely hear a good deal of noise as the work is being completed. Teachers, please contact (*name of principal*) if you are giving a test today near that stairwell and need a quieter space.
2. Students – Because of some unforeseen budget restraints, we have had to eliminate our school nurse position for the remainder of the semester. Therefore,

only serious medical conditions should be reported to the main office. By “serious,” we mean something that would require the main office staff to call 911 for EMS, like loss of consciousness, significant seizures, and the like. Fortunately, all faculty and staff have been trained on how to deal with bloodborne pathogens. Emergency kits and gloves can be found the teacher’s desk in every classroom so that injuries can be treated without leaving the classroom.

3. Students – There is a new change with the ice machine in the cafeteria beginning today because of its overuse. Frequent use by so many students has resulted in numerous maintenance costs. Beginning today, there will now be a charge of \$2.50 for each water-bottle sized amount of ice dispensed. There is a new device on the machine that accepts both coins and dollar bills, but it cannot provide change for anything over a \$5 bill. We are working to make it possible for you to scan your ID so that you can use your lunch account to purchase ice, but the system does not have this ability right now. Thank you for your patience, and we’ll let you know when this functionality has been added.

After all other announcements have been made:

I’m (*student’s name*), from the (*name of club/organization*) which is sponsoring today’s dress-down day to support relief efforts in Haiti. Think about how you felt when you learned that a stairwell would be off limits today and you would have to figure out a way to get around without it. The chaos related to recent political protests in Haiti, the poorest country in this hemisphere, have shut down schools and businesses. Because many streets are blockaded, people in Haiti can’t get to sources of food, clean water, hospitals, or schools. For us, having to get to class by a different route would be a hassle. But what if couldn’t ever leave our home for safety reasons even if we didn’t have enough food or water there? Would we risk our lives to venture out into blockaded areas for food? Or would we stay in the safety of our homes and risk starvation?

Think also about how you felt when you learned that our school nurse would no longer be available to you this year. In Haiti, the unrest has resulted in the closing of hospitals and other medical facilities. That means necessary surgeries are not being performed, and people are dying from even small wounds and illnesses because they can’t receive the medicine and treatment needed to heal them. We would be upset if we no longer had a school nurse, but think of what life would be like if we could not access medical treatment at all.

Finally, think about how you felt when you learned about the new cost of ice from the ice machine. In Haiti, over half of the population lives on less than \$2.40 per month. Inflation is outrageous there now. One gallon of fuel costs \$20. And most people don’t use fuel for cars because they don’t have that luxury, but fuel is needed to power hospitals and other essential services. We would be upset if we had to pay \$2.50 for a bottle full of ice, but most of us could do it if we had too. Think about what life would be like if we had to stretch that \$2.50 for all of our expenses for an entire month.

The good news is that all three of these things – the stairwell, nurse, and ice – were all announcements we just made up to make a point. You CAN use that stairwell today, the school nurse will be in (*her/his*) office like (*she/he*) always is, and ice from the machine is still free. But the bad news is that these fake inconveniences are nothing compared to real life in Haiti. Thank you very much for your donations today to help the Sisters of Mercy provide aid to the Haitian citizens most in need.

Tuesday before event

I'm (*student's name*), from the (*name of club/organization*) to remind you about Friday's dress-down day. Did you know that because of all the unrest in Haiti now, most schools and hospitals are not even open because it's too dangerous? Inflation has risen 500%, and one gallon of fuel now costs the equivalent of \$20. Fuel there is not used for driving cars; it's needed for basic electricity! There isn't enough food or safe drinking water. So please bring at least \$3 to participate in our dress-down day on Friday. And remember to follow the dress-down rules in the handbook. Thanks!

Thursday before event

I'm (*student's name*), from the (*name of club/organization*) with one last reminder about tomorrow's dress-down day to help Haiti. Think about this for a minute - have you heard about everything going on in Haiti in the news? You probably haven't. Why do you think that is? Could it be that because the people of Haiti are so poor and powerless that the rest of the world thinks they are less important than people in developed countries? Let's join together to address this injustice and stand with the Sisters of Mercy in providing essential aid to Haiti. Remember your \$3 on Friday!