**Vive la Volunteering**

By Isabella Williams

On the evening of November 13th, 2015, terrorists affiliated with the extremist group ISIS carried out a large-scale attack on numerous public venues in Paris. These areas included the national stadium, the Bataclan concert hall, as well as various restaurants and cafes throughout the city; in total, six locations were attacked, resulting in the death of 130 people and the injury of an additional 368.

The horrors of that night unfolded on the news, where people watched with horror as images of police cars, SWAT teams, and covered bodies were shown and the panic of France conveyed as the Eiffel Tower went dark and the French borders were closed. People in the United States watched with a simultaneous empathy but disconnect; they could relate the attacks to the events of 9/11, but felt withdrawn because nothing could be done.

However, the Verona High School French Club allowed Americans to fully connect with the French as the club collected money at the football game on Saturday, November 21st. The club set up a table at the home game and sold handmade bracelets and ribbons, in addition to lollipops. Announcements were made before the game and during halftime, informing those attending the game that the club was collecting money to donate to the Red Cross in order to support the victims of the Paris attacks. In addition, the Marching Maroon and White proudly sported the ribbons to show their solidarity. Through the donations and support of the community members, the club was able to raise just over $500, which will be promptly donated to the relief effort in France.

But the amount of money raised was not the only remarkable thing about the French Club; the students that started the idea, created the products, and manned the table were truly notable. I came up with the idea of raising money and donating it to the Red Cross after witnessing the atrocities of the attacks. As a French student, French Club member, and volunteer with the American Red Cross, I approached my French teacher Eugenie Mordkovich with the idea of a table at the upcoming football game. The idea immediately caught on, and preparations for the Saturday game began that Monday.

French Club members worked tirelessly during lunch, after school, and at home to create red, white, and blue bracelets and pins. After realizing the amount of bracelets that would be needed to be enough, all French students got involved as they worked on the products during their French classes. Every French student assisted, as well as some who just wanted to support the cause.

Everyone did this without the promise of volunteer hours or the chance to show off their “humanity” to colleges. Not one minute of work counted towards volunteer hours to become a member of National Honor Society, the main motivation to do volunteer work. The actions of the students were purely motivated by the desire to help the country whose language the students had been studying for countless years. The money being donated shows that France will continue to be a strong country that will recover from the attacks—“Vive la France!” But the efforts of the French students also show that honest-to-goodness volunteering is not dead either—“Vive la Volunteering!”

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