

Dear WJ Friends and Family,

My name is Can Torumtay, and I am a junior at Walter Johnson. As many of you may have heard, massive earthquakes have struck southeastern Turkey and the northern border of Syria with the latest reports estimating a death toll of close to 36,000 and rising. Most of my family either lives in or is from Turkey and this hits close to home for me. After hearing about this tragedy, my friend Olin Kimball suggested to me that we start a fundraising campaign to provide support for the many displaced people impacted by the earthquakes. Having been to Turkey himself, Olin has seen and experienced the country and its vivid people and culture, and he immediately felt attracted to the cause. Olin and I both began setting up the fundraiser along with support from Mr. Merrill, but quickly realized we needed more help. I reached out to a close friend of ours, Felix Ozpaker, another Turkish student, who quickly joined in the effort along with Victor Goerlitz who had heard about the devastating earthquake in his AP Human Geography class. The two of them made a huge difference in the entire process and helped to make the effort much more efficient.

After discussing and researching different organizations, we settled on the Red Crescent as the best organization for donation. The Red Crescent is an organization that works alongside the Red Cross, and the group actively delivers humanitarian aid and provides hot meals and drinks to areas impacted, provides psychological support to victims, and even funds search and rescue missions to help find those who are missing.

We collected our first donations this Monday and are continuing to collect donations this Wednesday the 15th, with our final day being Friday the 17th. WJ is an extremely diverse body of both staff and students. People from all over the world come together and form such an amazing community in just a single building. The support we have seen in only the first day of this fundraiser goes to show not just the impact we can have on the community, but quite literally the entire world. The main point that I want to get across with this message is that truly any donation can make a difference. We understand that not everyone is capable of providing donations, but even the act of bringing awareness to the cause is greatly appreciated and we extend our deepest gratitude to anyone who spreads the word.

We also want to thank Ms. Baker and the school's business office for helping us set up the online donation link.

Sincerely,

Can Torumtay, on behalf of Olin Kimball, Felix Ozpaker, and Victor Goerlitz

Here is the link to donate online at WJ or you can bring cash or a check to a social studies teacher or to Ginger Howard in the main office:

<https://mcpsmd.schoolcashonline.com/Fee/Details/28046/354/False/True>

Here is a link to further information about the [Red Crescent Organization](#)