

PRESS RELEASE

St. Mark Catholic School Takes Top Honors Nationwide for the Fifth Year in a Row *Local School Raises More Than \$55,000 for JDRF*

For the fifth consecutive year in a row, students at St. Mark Catholic School raised more than \$55,000 for the JDRF Kids Walk to Cure Diabetes. This achievement makes it the number one school in the country among approximately 800 schools for the fifth straight year. Students were hyped up during an action-packed launch of their campaign by local celebrities. Popular weatherman Mr. Larry Sprinkle from station NBC Charlotte emceed the event while mascots Sir Purr of the Carolina Panthers, Chubby from the Charlotte Checkers and Homer from the Charlotte Knights greeted students and exercised together in the school gym. Mr. Sprinkle thanked the students and families for their generous support in the past and encouraged them to raise even more funds this year.

Mr. Sprinkle along with other speakers including Mr. Sebastian Gomez, an instructor at ATA Karate discussed the importance of staying active and making good food choices. Mr. Gomez also taught the students and local mascots a few karate moves as a form of exercise. The students heard from Ethan Briggs, a high school student and youth ambassador with JDRF about how he lives with type 1 diabetes (T1D) on a daily basis.



The annual outreach program is an important one to the students. Four of their fellow students suffer from T1D and it is critical that a cure is found soon for those individuals and many others around the country. School campaign organizers host a variety of unique activities to raise funds and to make the drive fun for the students. Penny Wars, a competition to collect the most pennies between homeroom classes, and raffle ticket sales generated nearly \$10,000. Each day of the week leading up to the walk students were encouraged to participate in Spirit Days such as Pajama Day, Favorite Team Jersey and Crazy Hair Day to create a buzz for the campaign. The campaign wrapped up with a walk for students in elementary school grades while the middle-school students competed in the annual dodge ball tournament against their teachers.

Campaign funds will be directed to JDRF's Artificial Pancreas Project (APP,) which researches technology that will automatically monitor blood sugar levels and deliver insulin as necessary to those with T1D.

