

Belmont students aid teacher's Nepal project

Rick Stibel
News staff

Following the leader.

Spending last year in Troy Harris's leadership class left a lasting impression on Belmont secondary student Meagan Blaquiere.

When the 17-year-old Grade 12 student learned that Harris was trying to build a school in Nepal, she rolled up her sleeves and got to work.

"I really admire what he's trying to do," said Blaquiere, who's organizing a fundraiser to help the cause. "He's a big inspiration for me personally. I have a lot of respect for what he does, and this project in particular."

So much so that Blaquiere would like to go to Nepal and help Harris as the project moves forward.

"I want to be involved in making a positive difference with youth through politics or teaching," she said.

Harris — recently returned from seven months in Toronto putting the non-profit Canadian World Education Society together — estimates it will take about \$40,000 to build the school in Nepal and pay the teachers for a year.

He's managed to raise about \$10,000, and hopes to get started by the middle of November, even if it means using his own line of credit until the project gains more momentum.

"Ideally, another \$10,000 to \$15,000 would allow me to put all my efforts into the work that needs to be done," said Harris, who plans to organize similar initiatives in Africa and South and Central America.

Blaquiere aims to get Harris closer to that total with *An Acoustic Night for Education*, a fundraiser for Nepal and The Canadian World Education Society.

A lot of work has gone into the event, said Blaquiere, who helped organize two events that aided the food bank and Amnesty International.

"This one means the most personally because of how I feel about Mr. Harris and what he's trying to do," she noted.

Harris described Blaquiere as a remarkable individual willing to give her time unselfishly for worthwhile causes.

The event features Vince Vaccaro, a singer and songwriter who Blaquiere describes as an "amazing musician."

Vaccaro, who will record his first CD next month in Vancouver, has been gaining a reputation in the Victoria area for his original work.



Meagan Blaquiere
- Belmont student

Former Belmont student Michelle Brown will play piano and perform a selection of her original material, and Belmont student Lauren Wright will play guitar and sing some of her own songs as well.

Belmont student Camilo Dominguez, who's been amazing classmates with his magic tricks for the past three years, will add an entertaining change of pace to the evening's entertainment.

The event takes place Saturday Nov. 10 at 6:45 p.m. at Church of the Advent at 410 Mount View Ave., with tickets for \$12 at the door. "We want to sell out all 200 seats," Blaquiere added.

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Former Belmont secondary teacher Troy Harris on the roof of the world in Nepal. Belmont is hosting a fundraising night Saturday to support Harris's effort to build a school in the mountainous Asian nation.

Photo courtesy of Troy Harris