

Christian Brothers student organizes relief drive for state's fire victims

By Nancy Westlund
Herald staff

Scott McCalla, a freshman at Christian Brothers High School in Sacramento, has gathered the support of fellow students and Sacramento County 4-H members in a grassroots relief effort to aid families whose homes were devastated by recent fires that ravaged much of Southern California.

McCalla, 14, said the idea to assist the fire victims came to him one morning as he watched television news coverage of the wildfires.

"I saw these poor people and couldn't imagine what it would be like to have absolutely everything you own vanish in a few hours and wanted to provide some relief and comfort for them," he said.

A member of Sacramento County 4-H, McCalla took his idea of providing relief supplies such as blankets, sleeping bags, clothing items and monetary donations to a 4-H council meeting.

Marianne Bird, youth development advisor for Sacramento County 4-H, said the relief project was enthusiastically accepted and a prime example of "what 4-H is all about."

"Service is a big part of what we do, and whenever a young person does something positive they feel strongly about they're to be com-

mended," Bird said.

After receiving the support of Sacramento County 4-H, McCalla proceeded to enlist other 4-H groups in what has become a statewide relief effort.

McCalla made a joint request for relief support from students at Christian Brothers where he spoke with Leah Newton, director of service learning. As it turned out the timing was perfect, Newton said, to pair a fund raiser for fire victims with a scheduled homecoming rally held Nov. 7 at the high school.

"It was a great effort for the campus to get involved in and raise awareness about victims of the fires," said Newton, who reported that more than \$300 was raised at the fund-raising rally. "I'm impressed with Scott's initiative, maturity and passion to help others."

Christian Brothers is receiving a steady flow of donated items, which McCalla is planning to have transported by truck to 4-H collection centers in San Bernardino and San Diego counties which are in direct contact with families who are in need.

Monetary donations may be sent to Christian Brothers High School, 4315 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Sacramento 95820 or to Sacramento County 4-H, 4145 Branch Center Dr., Sacramento CA 95827.