OU raises record amount for UNICEF

By Julianna Parker
Transcript Staff Writer

University of Oklahoma students, faculty, staff and community members donated more than $5,300 to the United Nations Children’s Fund during this year’s Halloween trick-or-treat campaign, surpassing their goal of $3,000.

“It exceeded expectations,” Zach Messitte, vice provost for International Programs and executive director of the International Programs Center, said of the campaign.

IPC’s original goal was to raise $3,000 for UNICEF, which would put OU in the highest tier of giving for a university. Now OU will join Cornell and George Washington University as an “Emissary School,” Mesfitte said.

“This is a great example of the entire OU community coming together to help a few more children around the world gain access to food, medicine and shelter,” he said in a press release.

Messimtze pushed for the drive when he came to OU this year, wanting to make this an annual campaign, he said last month.

Volunteers distributed 1,500 orange trick-or-treat boxes around campus and to local businesses in October, according to the release. Costume parties to benefit UNICEF were held, and the International Advisory Committee helped coordinate student efforts on campus along with the Model United Nations Club. Several fraternities and sororities assisted as well.

Roosevelt Elementary School and Whittier Middle School in Norman, along with Noble’s Curtis Inge Middle School and Noble High School, also helped.

Pan American Student Association raised the most money of any campus organization and will be recognized with a plaque and a certificate from the International Programs Center, the release said.

“We are known to throw one of the biggest Halloween parties at OU, and felt like this would give us a great opportunity to give back to a good cause,” PANAM President Fernando Sarmiento said in the release.

The deadline for turning in the trick-or-treat boxes to IPC has passed, but the office is still accepting donations, Messitse said. Staff members were rolling up nickels from recent donations as late as Thursday, he said.

“It keeps trickling in,” Messitse said.

OU’s International Programs Center promotes a better understanding of the world by sponsoring international events, publications and conferences at OU. Its mission is to help ensure that the OU community, the state and the region are informed about the critical global issues in the 21st century. For more information, call the International Programs Center at 325-3381 or e-mail dncmom@ou.edu.

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