

GIMME SHELTER

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Hardly would those words, reminiscent of the famous hit by the *Rolling Stones*, evoke the images of countless refugees under ordinary circumstances; but these are surely not ordinary times.

Shelter: so elusive for so many of these refugees, so makeshift, so fragile, so absent, and for most who have left their shelter, their homes behind... what will become their shelter in the times ahead?



L TO R: MIMI GREGORY, BOB ERBSTEIN, EARL ANDERSON AND LAURA KERCKHOFF

The Naples Council on World Affairs, the third largest Council in the national network of World Affairs Councils, was founded here in 1981. To this day it continues the mandate of educating, inspiring and engaging Americans in international affairs, and the critical global issues of our times.

Of the ten annual lectures the Council offers its members, we chose "Migration" and the plight of these 11.5 million displaced, as one of our topics for this year's lecture series. Watching these throngs of mankind, burdened with the few remaining belongings they could carry, crossing borders on foot, risking their lives at sea, we searched for a small difference that we could make in this humanitarian crisis: and it arrived in the form of "Shelter Box."

Think of a larger, green, recycle bin: it weighs 120 pounds, and inside it lives shelter for up to 10 people: a tent that can withstand winds of 100 mph, the tools to erect it, a ground cloth, solar lighting, a stove to heat or use in cooking, thermal blankets, a water filtration system, mosquito nets and even children's activity packets.

The Council decided to include one of our schools in this project; believing that our efforts should be shared with a younger generation bearing

witness to the tragedy of this migration. Partnering with Seacrest Country Day School, we discovered that the students were anxious to join us in our efforts to increase awareness of how to provide shelter! We were fortunate to participate in a webinar from Cornwall, England, with site coordinator for Shelter Box distribution, Sam Hewitt. The entire Upper School at Seacrest, along with Board members of the Council, learned how the process of response to crises is managed on the ground, and served as further inspiration to all attending, that every human being deserves the basics of food and shelter.

Choosing the day of our lecture on the refugee crisis, we set up a Shelter Box tent on the grounds outside our lecture hall at St. John The Evangelist, and several of the students from Seacrest along with their Headmaster, Dr. John Watson, and Upper School Head, Mrs. Erin Duffy, spoke to our audience of 1500 members endorsing their support of our joint project. Further, we raised another Shelter Box tent at our Model United Nations competition on March 12th on the campus of Florida Gulf Coast University, and welcomed Kerri Murray, Shelter Box President, to address the assembled students.

We are proud of the Naples Council's contribution to sheltering even a small number of refugees, and we celebrate the energy behind the recent "Sadie Hawkins Day" dance at Seacrest which raised enough for the students to buy a Shelter Box as well.

Remembering that a "rolling stone" [analogy intended] gathers no moss, we are proud of the shelter that we, the Naples Council and Seacrest Country Day School, have provided for some number of needy refugees. Perhaps now those "rolling stones" may begin to gather moss, and we will continue to support our program of "Gimme Shelter."



THE PRESIDENT, KERRI MURRAY, IS FEATURED WITH AN ACTUAL SHELTER BOX AND SURROUNDED BY THE KIDS AT MODEL UNITED NATIONS.

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BOX

Want to know more
about Shelter Box?

Call Laura Kerckhoff,
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