



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**For more information, contact:**

Mandi Semple, Associate Director – Communications

Phone: 925-362-7212

Email: [mandi.semple@athenian.org](mailto:mandi.semple@athenian.org)

The Athenian School  
2100 Mt. Diablo Scenic Boulevard  
Danville, CA 94506  
[www.athenian.org](http://www.athenian.org)

**STUDENT-ORGANIZED DARFUR FUNDRAISER DEMONSTRATES ATHENIAN'S  
COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY SERVICE**

The philosophy of The Athenian School is guided by a strong belief in the promise of young people to shape a better world. When Dyke Brown founded the School in 1965, he envisioned an education that would result in the full development of each student. Thus, intellectual growth, fitness of body and character, commitment to humane values, aesthetic sensitivity, and readiness for adult citizenship and leadership are at the heart of Athenian's mission. Good citizenship and strong leadership are integral to participation in the Athenian community, and the School's community service program has been at the core of the curriculum since the School welcomed its first students more than forty years ago.

Along with a challenging and multifaceted academic curriculum, a key tenet of the educational approach at Athenian is that lessons learned through community involvement are as important as those learned in the classroom. This type of experiential learning is a fundamental component of Athenian's community service and academic program. A current example of this experiential learning is the Second Annual Darfur Benefit Show taking place at The Athenian School on Thursday, December 6, 2007, from 6:30 to 9 pm at the Center for the Arts. The benefit event is being produced by students in The Holocaust Seminar course. All proceeds from the event will be donated to aid in raising awareness and relief for the victims of the Sudanese genocide. There will be music, dance and poetry performances by Athenian students, and a Sudanese survivor will speak to the audience. At the end of the evening, there will be a silent auction featuring student work that has been donated in support of stopping the genocide in Darfur. There is a minimum of a \$5 donation, and all proceeds will go to the Save Darfur Organization. (Contact Athenian senior Allyson Mayer at [allyson.mayer@athenian.org](mailto:allyson.mayer@athenian.org) for more information about this benefit event.)

In the Upper School, students can choose from the more than 10 history seminars that are offered annually. Students who chose The Holocaust Seminar course are taking what they are learning in class and applying it to the present. Because students are truly engaged in the depth of what they are studying, they realize that they too have a voice and can do things to make a difference in the world. As Head of School Eleanor Dase states, “Students in The Holocaust Seminar are not discouraged by the past. Instead, they learn from it and become encouraged about the here and now. They are encouraged by the future and are choosing to become active participants of change.”

In addition to the experiential learning component of community involvement, community service is a graduation requirement at Athenian. Successful completion of each year’s community service program is essential in both the Middle School (grades 6 to 8) and the Upper School (grades 9 to 12). The primary goals of the program are to:

- Develop students’ citizenship skills, including their ability to analyze and advocate for a social issue and to take leadership to address community needs
- Develop ongoing relationships between students and persons different from themselves; develop students’ respect for the dignity of all persons
- Make a substantive difference in communities through reciprocal relationships with non-profit organizations and government agencies
- Inculcate service as a way of life
- Foster civic virtues such as integrity, courage, responsibility, and compassion
- Invigorate the core curriculum by providing a meaningful context for students to understand and utilize classroom learning

Though community service is a requirement for graduation, most students incorporate service to others and the world around them as a way of life. As Chris McCulloch, Middle School Dean of Students and faculty member, explains, “Dyke Brown, Athenian’s founder, envisioned community service as a key component to an education that stresses not only academics, but also personal development and awareness of the surrounding world. It is in this same spirit that we ask our current students to involve themselves in their own communities and to lend a hand where there is a need. While community service is a school requirement, many of our students pursue it with a passion, motivated purely by their own desires to help others.”

Many other community service projects beyond the Darfur Fundraiser are actively taking place on campus at this time of year. The Athenian community, which implies students, faculty, staff and parents, are supporting students at the Starehe School in Kenya, a Round Square school where 70 percent of the students who attend are on scholarship. The School is fundraising to help reforest Haiti and to support the Amani Children’s Home, an orphanage in Tanzania that Athenian students visited last year. All 10<sup>th</sup> grade students will go to the St. Anthony’s Dining Room in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco to serve lunch to the needy and homeless and to learn about poverty in the United States. For the holidays,

Athenian is participating in a gift drive in partnership with several organizations to support families in the East Bay — Jewish Family and Children’s Services, Shelter Inc. and Brighter Beginnings.

***ABOUT THE ATHENIAN SCHOOL:*** A distinctive San Francisco Bay Area college preparatory school, Athenian has been recognized since its founding in 1965 for its exceptional integration of strong college preparatory academics with an innovative, challenging curriculum. The School’s diverse and international community of 455 day and boarding students in grades 6 through 12 benefits from small classes which average 15 students. Athenian’s 75-acre campus of rolling oak-covered hills lies at the base of Mt. Diablo in Danville, 32 miles east of San Francisco. In Athenian’s idyllic setting, students celebrate learning through relationships, exploration, hands-on projects, service and adventure — in addition to their work in the classroom. The Athenian School is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and the California Association of Independent Schools.

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***Second Annual Darfur Benefit Show***  
***Thursday, December 6, 2007, 6:30 pm – 9 pm***  
***The Athenian School at the Center for the Arts***  
***2100 Mount Diablo Scenic Boulevard***  
***Danville, CA 94506***  
***925-362-7212***