

- "April 8, 2011"

Posted by gavazzi.1

Created on April 11, 2011 at 10:58am - Last updated April 11, 2011 at 11:00am

"Do not judge someone until you have walked a mile in their shoes." (American Proverb).

This past Tuesday the OSU Mansfield campus hosted "One Day without Shoes." This event was designed to raise awareness about how difficult life without shoes is – something that many children and families experience on a daily basis throughout the world – as well as helping communities gain more of a sense of the breadth and depth of this problem (www.onedaywithoutshoes.com).

Our students – and more specifically the Scarlet and Gray student organization – were responsible for organizing and enlisting the participation of other fellow students (including representation from both the OSU-M and North Central State College campuses), as well as faculty and staff. Special commendation goes to Scarlet and Gray's Sam Hanshaw, David Yoder, and Cody Moistner for their work on this event, and thanks as well go to Sam Hanshaw for first presenting the idea to this group. I would be remiss if I did not indicate additional thanks to Lauren Hiltner, Sarah Galat, and Shari Petersen for their leadership efforts on this project.

All told, about 100 people (the vast majority of whom were students) participated in this inaugural event. These numbers are all the more impressive because it was very cold that day. In fact, the temperature was hovering around the freezing mark, and we had snowflakes falling for at least half of the time we were out walking the campus. I was there, leading the walk, so I can attest to the rather uncomfortable conditions that confronted our group. In fact, I could not feel the soles of my feet for at least an hour after we had returned inside. And yet, there was so much genuine warmth and camaraderie that seemed to radiate from the group, so much so that the numbness in my feet hardly seemed to matter.

Yes, we raised awareness of a very important cause. And at the same time, I believe that we elevated our consciousness of the significant positive power that comes from acting as a group. Our actions spoke very loudly that day, not only about the injustices surrounding children and families without appropriate footwear, but also about the compassionate nature of our campus. Please take the time to make a donation of gently used footwear from now until April 15th in the bins that have been made available across campus. And in the meantime, please take the time to enjoy the weekend with family and friends!

Steve Gavazzi