



From left to right, Danbury High student Thomas DePaoli, 17, assistant principal Tim Salem, student Carly Brantley, 17, Douglas D'Jay, chairman of the Cartus Save the Children Committee, and student Bailey Brown, 16, discuss the school's continuing efforts to make a difference with the crisis in Darfur.

Carol Kaliff/Staff photographer

Danbury students team up to walk for school in Darfur

School districts, Cartus work with Save the Children to help raise \$100,000

By Eileen Fitzgerald

STAFF WRITER

DANBURY — Student walkers here and in Farmington, Mich., will be hundreds of miles away from each but united next month in the effort to raise money for a school in the Darfur region of Sudan.

The two school districts and Cartus, a Danbury-based corporation, are working with Save the Children to raise the needed \$100,000 for the school in the region, where as many as 400,000 people have been killed and millions more have been displaced from homes and are at risk of starvation.

Danbury High School and North Farmington High School will host walkathons Oct. 26 to raise funds.

Bushara Dosa, president of the Darfur People's Association of New York, one of the largest groups of Darfur refugees in the United States, will walk in the Danbury event.

Danbury students began raising awareness about the genocide in Darfur in 2004 under the leadership of assistant principal Tim Salem and made two films on the

IF YOU GO

WHAT: Walkathon/Rally to raise money for school in Darfur

WHEN: Sunday, Oct. 26, noon to 9 p.m.
Barbecue from noon to 1 p.m. by Danbury High Booster Club Rally at 1 p.m.

Walk starts at 2 p.m.
Walk either 75 minutes or 75 laps (18.75 miles) around the 1/4-mile track.

WHERE: Danbury High School track

TO DOWNLOAD PLEDGE SHEET: Visit www.schoolinsudan.org

TO DONATE: Send check payable to:

"Save the Children / Sudan School Project"
To: Save the Children
Attn: Lynne Lebaron
54 Wilton Road
Westport, CT 06880

faces who watch the video. The more we get out there, the more it will help others to try to do more."

The students helped create two short documentaries about the genocide in Darfur and have given hundreds of presentations to schools and

to be built will be called The Promise School.

"It's our job to help these people who are suffering," said senior Jacy Bispo, 17, who also has been helping with the Darfur initiative.

She said talking in front of people was tough at first. "It's hard to do," she said, "but it's something I developed a passion for."

Danbury High's association with North Farmington High School began in February 2007. At that time, North Farmington High Principal Rick Jones invited the Danbury students to present their work during a school-wide interdisciplinary project about genocide. At that event, the two schools heard from Rwandan activist Paul Rusesabagina about his work and its depiction in the movie "Hotel Rwanda."

"Lots of our kids were inspired meeting Jim's kids and hearing how they organized the state of Connecticut to divest its holdings in Sudan," Jones said Tuesday.

Since then, he said, the Farmington students followed the same path and the Michigan legislature voted to divest in the Sudan.

"These young people and their film educated us to the extent that we wanted to build something of lasting significance," said Douglas D'Jay, the chair of the company's Save the Children committee, which has 130 members.

The Landegger Charitable Foundation gave the company a \$10,000 donation to the school project last Christmas and this week, the Darfur school fund totaled \$52,000.

A medical center will be built alongside the school if enough money can be raised, Salem said.

Salem said the three things refugees ask for is water, protection and education, in that order.

"This project connects two of those requests," he said, since the school will have a water supply.

All 18 schools in Farmington are committed to the walk and Salem hopes other Danbury schools will join with the high school in the event.

He said it's a good project for students since it's not a question if the school will be built, but when.

"It's something they will