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### **Charlotte High School Students Show the Power of Student Engagement**

High school students have the tremendous power to make a difference in their schools and in their communities. Nowhere is this more evident than in Charlotte. In early March, Charlotte High School seniors demonstrated what pride in a school and in a community means. Throughout the school year, they worked in groups to plan senior projects around the simple premise that they had to do something to benefit their school or their community. Then, on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, they put all of their planning into action. From that simple goal, the students created murals throughout the school, and they built picnic tables for a local park. They assembled flags that the Kiwanis Club sets up in the Courthouse Square downtown, they catalogued the flags and artifacts that honor our veterans throughout the district, and they created a video that teaches freshmen what it means to succeed in school. They volunteered at the Eaton County SIREN Shelter, and they planned an intermural volleyball tournament, which took place, with great success, on March 6<sup>th</sup>. They cleaned and catalogued artifacts in the Courthouse Square Museum, and they planned a benefit concert and then held it at the Eaton Area Senior Center on March 24<sup>th</sup>; the proceeds went to the SIREN Shelter. Finally, they created a video to highlight all of the extracurricular opportunities at CHS, and they increased Oriole Pride in the school by filling showcases and numbering the hallways in orange and black. In short, they met their goal; they improved Charlotte High School, and they improved the Charlotte community.

This was the first year that Charlotte High School seniors have completed these types of projects, but the impact of their work makes certain that this will become an annual event at CHS. The entire process, from creation of the projects to the planning to the implementation, proves that high school students have the potential to play a very positive role in the shape and direction of the communities in which they live and the schools in which they learn. Empowered young men and women, driven by school and community improvement goals, really can make a difference, as this year's senior Orioles proved to Charlotte and its high school. The lasting lessons, and impacts, of this work will certainly be felt beyond this school year by the students, the school, and the community, and they will lay the foundation for future success. Strong communities and strong schools can't be built by the adults alone, and with the help of its students, Charlotte proved how powerful student action can be. Go Orioles! Oriole Pride!