



For Immediate Release

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Media Release

Lambs Elementary welcomes First Lady and Second Lady to school

Lambs Elementary School

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NORTH CHARLESTON, SC - Learning about emergency preparedness is extremely important for students in the Lowcountry. When they learn about that subject with special guests from the White House, in the same room, it really drives home the lesson.

Fifth graders at Lambs Elementary School spent part of their of the morning on October 30, 2019, with First Lady Melania Trump and Second Lady Karen Pence as they participated in the American Red Cross' Pillowcase Project. The initiative aims to increase awareness and understanding of natural hazards and teaches safety, emotional coping skills, and personal preparedness.

"I feel that we are very fortunate to have had this opportunity," said Lambs Principal Jamie McCarthy. We worked with the students and the staff to explain and teach them who these ladies are, what they represent, and also with the American Red Cross to make sure we are teaching those important skills."

Mrs. Trump and Mrs. Pence were greeted by Principal McCarthy, Charleston County School District Board of Trustees Member Todd Garrett, and Red Cross Regional Chief Executive Officer Louise Welch Williams, and then joined the students in the media center for the program.

This opportunity was especially meaningful for Mrs. Trump; she served as Goodwill Ambassador the Red Cross a decade ago.

"It's a great platform for the American Red Cross, South Carolina, and our partnerships throughout the state, like Lambs Elementary," explained Williams. "We often find that the students, the children, are actually the ones who get the family prepared [during an evacuation]. So this was an opportunity for them to learn about everything, from a house fire to a hurricane."

The highlight of the program was students decorating and personalizing their pillowcases. The scholars can use the pillowcases to share what they learned, and what they are prepared for, with their family and friends.

"You have to have a plan," said Lamb's fifth grader Gia Weiters. "When I get home, I need to tell my mother we need to have a plan."

"It is important that our students are prepared and that they know what to do in an emergency situation because we have gone through that on a regular basis [in our area]," added McCarthy. "Mrs. Trump asked the children if they had evacuated before. They provided wonderful answers, and I heard them talking about material that I knew they were going to learn about in the presentation. That just hit home to know that, yes, this was a wonderful experience but it was also an important learning experience."

The students learned about the visit on Monday. Fifth grader Thomas Newman said he hadn't been that excited in a long time, maybe ever.

"At that moment, my heart exploded," exclaimed Newman. "I've never met anyone famous like that before."

However, he was even more excited when Mrs. Trump and Mrs. Pence entered the media center and spoke with him about the pillowcase.

"I was still nervous because I had sit in between the First and Second Lady," Newman noted. "We talked about the things we might need, like extra batteries for flashlights, and notes for other emergencies that might happen along the trail."

Weiters said the past few days were almost too hard to explain. The moment she found out Mrs. Trump and Mrs. Pence were coming and the opportunity to meet them in person have become lifelong memories.

"My mom was so excited," recalled Weiters. "She said 'I have to get your hair done. I have to do all this stuff.' I didn't want to get my hair done; she hurts my head."

Weiters continued with her honest take on the experience, describing her interaction with Mrs. Trump and Mrs. Pence as something she will never forget for the rest of her life.

"I was thinking 'They are going to sit by me?'" Weiters recalled. "'What I am going to do? What am I going to say?' Then she came by me and said 'Hello honey, how are you doing?' She touched my shoulder, and my shoulder was so happy. All you could hear was 'Yay!'"

As the class was wrapping up, the students and staff gathered for a picture with their distinguished guests, a picture that will serve a reminder of this experience. Then Mrs. Trump and Mrs. Pence received a farewell from the rest of the school as they got back in the motorcade to return to Joint Base Charleston.

The students aren't the only ones from Lambs who will have a story to tell for the rest of their lives. School staff members said this was one of the most memorable days of their educational careers; they were thankful their students were part of this unique experience as well as for the opportunity the school had to stand out to the community, state, and nation.

"What I will remember most is how proud of a feeling I have right now," McCarthy explained. "All of our hard work really paid off and we were able to shine today. I'm really just so proud of all of the staff and students and how we were represented today. It's very important."

"They were all on their best behavior and so respectful," said McCarthy. "I am extremely proud of the manners that they showed. When I was walking with Mrs. Trump and Mrs. Pence, they shared with me that they were very impressed by our school and our students, [including] the interactions they had with our students. So that, for me, was a very proud moment."

For more information about the visit by the First Lady and Second Lady, please contact Principal Jamie McCarthy at (843) 767-5900. To learn more about the Pillowcase Project, contact American Red Cross Regional Communications Director Ben Williamson at Benjamin.williamson@redcross.org.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is the second largest school system in South Carolina representing a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 87 schools and specialized programs. With approximately 6,100 employees district-wide, CCSD is the fourth largest employer in the region.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, charter, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), and Montessori schools, and is divided into three Learning Communities. Options include specialized programs in science, engineering and mathematics; liberal arts; music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military and other public service enterprises.