



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Record-Breaking Low Temps Bring Unexpectedly High Donations to the
Naperville Education Foundation: 438 student-created snow day t-shirts SOLD raising nearly
\$2,700 for the Foundation**

Naperville, IL – The Naperville Education Foundation became the unexpected financial beneficiaries of the polar vortex, raising \$2,694.50 in 4 days with the help of a Tweet from a creative student, a snow day t-shirt and a willing Superintendent. While much of the country was blanketed by a deep freeze and record-breaking low temperatures, one young man from Naperville Central High School used his time indoors as an opportunity to raise money for his local education foundation. What started with a tweet, he took all the way to the bank for the Naperville Education Foundation.

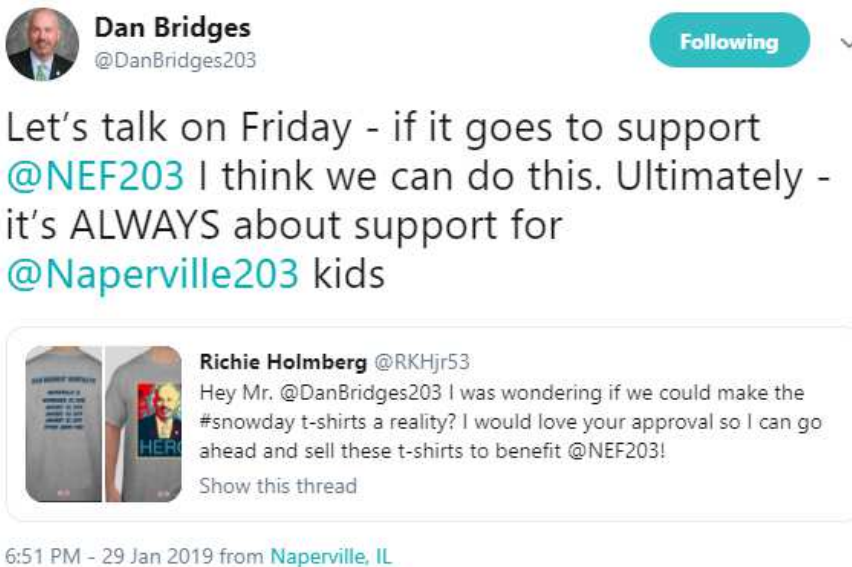
With the prospect of additional “snow days” due to last week’s cold weather, some Naperville high school students took to Twitter to offer their suggestions to Naperville Community Unit School District 203 Superintendent Dan Bridges about why school should be canceled. The Superintendent soon announced the second and third school cancelation in a single week, bringing the total number of “snow days” for the school year to 4.

Richie Holmberg, a junior at Naperville Central High School, decided to recognize Mr. Bridges as a “hero” for the snow day decision and created a 2018-19 Commemorative Snow Day t-shirt, featuring the superintendent on the front, emblazoned with the “hero” label, and list of the year’s 4 snow days (so far) on the back, similar to a concert t-shirt’s tour dates, with the word “canceled” on top.



Tweeting a mockup to the superintendent, Holmberg asked, “Hey Mr. @DanBridges203. I was wondering if we could make the #snowday t-shirts a reality? I would love your approval so I can go ahead and sell these shirts to benefit @NEF203!” NEF203 is the Naperville Education Foundation, the philanthropic foundation supporting the needs of the school district’s students.

Bridges, used to frequent tweets from his high school followers, responded: “Let’s talk on Friday – if it goes to support @NEF203, I think we can do this. Ultimately It’s ALWAYS about support for @Naperville203 kids.” And with that, Holmberg was off and running.



Holmberg used the 2 consecutive snow days caused by the polar vortex to set to work. “This feat was accomplished over a couple of snow days, a time often bemoaned by parents and teachers alike for

stopping students' learning," said Holmberg. All proceeds from the sale of the \$16 shirt benefit NEF, which raises money to enhance and enrich students' educational experiences.

By lunchtime on Friday, with students back to school and a little help from NEF, an online store was up and running. Holmberg launched the store with a tweet sent in between classes, and 100 shirts sold in the first hour. Brisk sales continued as the store was open only for a limited time, closing Monday, February 4 at midnight, with final sales at 438 sold bringing in \$2,694.50 for the Foundation, a number far beyond anyone's expectations.

"I'm in awe," stated the Executive Director of the Naperville Education Foundation, Wendy Goettsch. "What a great way to spend a snow day; making the vision a reality and giving back to the community as well. This idea falls perfectly in line with NEF's mission to encourage creativity and innovation in our students."

Mr. Bridges tweeted his response, referencing the District's mission statement to "educate students to be self-directed learners, collaborative workers, complex thinkers, quality producers and community contributors." Bridges tweeted: "#selfdirectedlearner #communitycontributor #empower203 At least it's for the kids..."

"We know this would not have been possible without the creative idea of one student and without the support of the Superintendent, Mr. Bridges," Goettsch said. "Who knew the polar vortex would bring our community together in this wonderful way."

"I may have had the idea to make the shirts, but it was a collective effort that made them possible," Holmberg said. "Thanks to Mr. Bridges for being good-natured and encouraging, everyone at NEF for help with the heavy lifting, and to Melissa Zhang for social media promotion. We have been able to make these shirts the talk of the town and raise money for a good cause."

Once shirts are distributed, NEF will announce an all-district day to "Wear your Snow Day T- Shirt."

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The Naperville Education Foundation (NEF) raises and grants funds for programs that enhance and enrich the educational experience of Naperville School District 203 students. With the generous support of foundations, businesses, educational professionals and individual donors, NEF is able to provide financial resources that increase learning opportunities by supplementing school district budgets. NEF encourages creativity, innovation and excellence in our students by helping to ensure that every student in the district can take advantage of opportunities to make the most of their education.

www.nef203.org.