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High school lends Watsonville a hand

AGOURA HILLS (AP) — The Agoura High School student government was moved by the plight of earthquake victims in Northern California to raise funds for students at a high school in the stricken community of Watsonville.

Stunned by the devastation, student leaders at Agoura High, an 1,850-student campus that serves the affluent cities of Westlake Village and Agoura Hills, began a fund-raising campaign Wednesday. They hope to raise enough cash to help the 2,400 students at the high school.

On the first day of the drive, students raised \$330, Adam Warren, the student body president said. Warren said he saw one student donate \$20.

"The kids here are pretty well off and they're pretty generous," Assistant Principal Bob Donahue said. "The kids really came up with the idea ... trying to find a way to help."

Donahue and Principal Mike Botsford started calling schools in the quake area to see which needed help the most and decided Watsonville, near the quake's epicenter, was hardest hit.

"We're very grateful to them," Watsonville High Principal Tony Calvo said in a telephone interview. "We'll accept any help we can get."

The quake damaged the school's walls, put a crack in the swimming pool, and destroyed much of its equipment, including televisions and computers, he said.

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**— Tony Calvo,
Watsonville High**

Only 60 percent of the student body returned to the school when it reopened. Many students who have not returned are homeless, Watsonville Student Body President Irma Vasquez said.

She is without a home herself, since hers fell off its foundation. Her family is staying with an aunt, she said.

Students also have not returned to school because it is hard to get through to the school since many of the roads and a bridge are closed, Vasquez said. Fear is also a factor. Many students said they were afraid to come back to the school, and they particularly did not want to go into the school's two-story main building, she said.

The school is nearly 100 years old, but the main building was recently remodeled.

The city suffered so much damage that students would like to donate some of the money raised by Agoura High School to the community, Vasquez said. "Our downtown is pretty much gone."