Four years ago, I was invited to New York to attend a United Nations Student Conference with the school I was coaching with at the time. While in New York, I spoke to current Men's National Team coach and longtime friend, Mike Tolkin, if there was a way my students could spend some time with the Xavier High School students to view what the high school experience was like for kids the same age in two different countries.

Mike arranged for my students to be escorted around their classes for the morning and have time to get to know each other as people as opposed to just being a dry, stuffy, escorted visit. I was taken to the staff room and had long talks with as many teachers as I could about life at the school, living in one of the world's great cities and the challenges of bringing a rugby program to a school where there was little or no green field spaces.

Halfway through the morning, I asked about their experiences on 9/11. The humanity, bravery and humility with how they all dealt with that day was something I was honoured to hear and will never forget. It was this morning spent at Xavier High School, which left an indelible mark on me and today, whenever I look at high school results on Rugbymag.com, Xavier is always the first name I look for.

On our return home, a questionnaire was given to the students to say what the highlight of their visits was. My students did everything they could do in three days – Times Square, Empire State Building, United Nations, Bloomingdales and so on but to a boy and girl, everyone said the highlight was the Xavier High School visit.

A few weeks ago, along with the entire world, I was watching CNN when Hurricane Sandy hit and was simply stunned at what was happening to the people of New Jersey and New York. Shortly afterwards, I sent Bruce McLane an email to see if he and his family were okay and it was then he told me that 80 students and their families were directly effected by Hurricane Sandy. Many had lost their homes, were living with friends / relatives and the school had just created a fund to help those students. From all over the USA, alumni of the school set about raising money to help the students and their families but from this side of the pond, there was very little I could do to help – or so I thought.

The idea for the below film came in a conversation with Alex Goff and Bruce a few weeks ago

who had seen some of the films I had produced previously to help my work with the All American teams – They asked would I do something similar to help raise the profile of the fund in a unique way.

Therefore, what you are about to see is a brief review of our Autumn International Rugby Series in support of Xavier High School. I know many people will see this film and will learn something from it even if it is just to see another version of the famous Haka. If you have learned something and have enjoyed watching it, could you please donate a few dollars to the fund that can be found by going to the schools website. I know times are tough so no-one is asking for hundreds of dollars but if you can donate anything, the children and their families can be helped to see a little light at the end of the tunnel this holiday season.

DONATIONS TO THE FAMILIES CAN BE MADE THROUGH WWW.XAVIERHS.ORG

Thank You and Happy Holidays

Eamonn Hogan