

## **Kindness, respect are cornerstones of group**

*By Michelle Haacke, For The Globe Gazette*

OSAGE — A group of Osage High School students is finding the simple things can make all the difference in the world: One simple act, a kind word, a smile, a thoughtful gesture.

It's for that reason students of the FOR organization were selling Thanksgiving Grams before Thanksgiving break.

"It's a note you send to someone to let them know you're thinking of them and thankful for them," said senior Brianna Funte, a member of FOR. "You can buy them for whoever you want, teachers and students."

While Thanksgiving is a time to show thanks to friends and family, FOR strives to make a difference all year.

"The goal of FOR is to include as many people as we can in things with random acts of kindness. The proceeds also go to a good cause," said senior Brooke Bodensteiner, also a FOR member. "We're trying to benefit the school and the community."

FOR, short for Friends of Rachel, is a group of students at OHS who have accepted "Rachel's Challenge." Rachel Scott was the first person killed in the Columbine High School tragedy on April 20, 1999. Her acts of kindness have served as an inspiration.

"The whole idea behind FOR is to show kindness and respect," said OHS Guidance Counselor Michelle Dohlman. "It's another way we can encompass positive behavior school wide. Our group is actively working to do different things, little ditties for people and groups. It's sometimes easy to say negative things, so this keeps the positive at top of mind."

The group has made a difference. Raking leaves, sending a well-wishes card to Connor Gordon, and cooking lunch for the school cooks are just a few of the acts of kindness the group has done.

They are also on hand for new student orientations.

"For new kids to see a warm, friendly face is quite welcome for them. It makes the transition to a new school not so difficult. They'll see someone they recognize from FOR and feel comfortable asking them questions," said Dohlman.

According to Dohlman, the group has made an impact on students who are not in the spotlight through sports or other extra curricular activities.

The group meets every other Tuesday morning.

"For kids to be in this group, following Rachel's Challenge is about being who they are and standing out in a way when maybe it's not the popular thing to do," Dohlman said. "Just doing things that put smiles on peoples faces."