

MACOMB DAILY NEWS

News

Stuff the Bus offers Chippewa Valley students holiday support



Chippewa Valley Schools Director of Transportation

Brendan Wagner, Chippewa Valley bus driver Jan Reed and Chippewa Valley Schools Human Resources Supervisor Dawn Leone display signage that will adorn a district bus on Nov. 11 and 12, when the Stuff the Bus collection is held at a Clinton Township Walmart. Photo courtesy of CHIPPEWA VALLEY SCHOOLS

By Nicole Tuttl, For The Macomb Daily

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POSTED: 11/06/17, 7:50 AM EST |



Walmart at 18400 Hall Road in Clinton Township will be the location for the Stuff the Bus efforts of Chippewa Valley Schools on Nov. 11 and 12. Nicole Tuttle — For the Macomb Daily

Jan Reed is a driving force in Chippewa Valley Schools. Not only is she charged with safely transporting children of all ages and grades back and forth to the district's schools as a bus driver with 10 years of experience, but she is also driving a holiday collection effort for district students in need.

Reed said her idea to assist Chippewa Valley Schools students in need began last year with a smaller effort at Miami Elementary School in Clinton Township, for which she rallied fellow bus drivers to give.

“I went to Miami and talked to one of the social workers there, and I was able to get enough to feed and clothe four families,” Reed said.

The effort produced over \$400 and items such as new toys, clothes and gift cards, prompting the idea of approaching Chippewa Valley Schools Director of Transportation Brendan Wagner this year about expanding, according to Reed.

“We did so good. And I thought about it and I came to Brendan who is my boss and I said ‘Let’s help more, do a stuff a bus.’ He was all for it. We went down to HR (Human Resources) and we just really kind of pulled it together,” Reed said.

Stuff the Bus to support Chippewa Valley Schools families in need districtwide will be held Nov. 11-12. A district bus marked with appropriate signage will be available in the parking lot of the Walmart located at 18400 Hall Road in Clinton Township from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. both days. Items being sought to fill the bus include new clothing, boots, shoes, coats, gloves, hats, socks, underwear, toiletries, gift cards, toys and non-perishable food items.

“My gut feeling is that we will be surprised beyond our imaginations about what we will end up collecting or what people end up donating,” Wagner said.

Reed hopes to support as many students across the district as possible.

Chippewa Valley Schools Human Resources Supervisor Dawn Leone and Director of School/Community Relations Diane Blain arranged for the Walmart location as central to the district and a location to obtain a wide variety of goods, according to Reed and Wagner.

Reed, who also works part time for PODS, was able to get a PODS container donated. It is located at the district’s transportation department for temporary storage of the items prior to distribution to families.

Wagner said school counselors have been able to help in identifying students in need.

“Lori Durkee, who is also involved, is now a transitional student liaison. She is obviously tied in to a lot of families in need...” Wagner said.

Wagner said that ideally, the Chippewa Valley Schools Transportation Department would like to be able to create a pantry available to families in need year round.