

Chippewa Valley Schools collects items to assist local families

By: [Alex Szwarc](#) | C&G Newspapers | Published November 12, 2019



Children get ready to help stuff the bus with donated items for Chippewa Valley Schools' Stuff the Bus event at Walmart in Clinton Township Nov. 2. It's estimated that 400-500 items were donated.
Photo by Erin Sanchez



From left, Chippewa Valley Schools bus drivers Terri Jackson, Barb Csernai, Mike Dekoski and Michele Brazier took part in the event.
Photo by Erin Sanchez

CLINTON TOWNSHIP/MACOMB TOWNSHIP — It was a combined effort to benefit the less fortunate this holiday season.

Chippewa Valley Schools bus drivers, along with high school honors students from around the district, came together Nov. 2-3 at the Walmart on Hall Road in Clinton Township for the third annual Stuff the Bus program.

The goal was to collect new clothing, boots, shoes, coats, hats, gloves, underwear and socks to support district families in need. Additionally, toys, toiletries, gift cards and nonperishable food items were donated.

All collected items support district families around Macomb County.

“We have a lot of students within Chippewa Valley Schools that are in need,” Chippewa Valley Schools bus driver Michele Brazier said. “You never know what walks of life they come from or what tragedies hit these families.”

She estimates that hundreds of people, many who aren’t affiliated with the district, dropped items off — an increase from previous years.

The weekend-long giving project was organized by Chippewa Valley Schools bus drivers, with help from Dakota and Chippewa Valley high school students.

Two district bus drivers who took the lead for this year’s project are Brazier and Mike Dekoski.

As bus drivers, they said that every day, they see students ill-equipped for the cold weather.

“They’re wrapped in blankets because they don’t have coats to wear, or they get on the bus with flip-flops on because they don’t have boots to wear,” Brazier said.

Social workers within the district identify which families can benefit from the program.

“We have students that, for whatever reason, end up in motels, and we offer them whatever we can offer them, resource-wise,” she said.

By receiving items, Brazier hopes students will be uplifted and feel they belong and are like their friends.

“It helps ease the burden of these families that are in such desperate need,” she said.

Dekoski said the event went very well, drawing more participants than he anticipated. He guesses between 400 and 500 items were donated.

“This program is important to help those kids who need proper outfitting,” he said. “Everyone’s helping each other out, and at this time of the year, it’s important to help others out. Most people, I believe, it comes from their heart.”

The week of Nov. 4, items were inventoried and organized, with distribution beginning soon after.

Brazier was told by a Walmart manager that store revenue was up 20% over the weekend.

“It helps Walmart, but in the end, it helps these students in need, so it’s a win-win,” she said.

Brazier estimates between 40 and 50 families will be helped.

What she noticed from the collection is that folks want to give, but sometimes don’t know where or how.

“We thank the public very much for donating,” Dekoski said. “I love seeing people getting involved in the community.”

Anyone still looking to donate can drop items off at the Chippewa Valley Schools Administration Building, 19120 Cass Ave. in Clinton Township.