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Boys and Girls Club Relocating to Middle School Campus

SEPTEMBER 28TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Boys and Girls Club Relocating to Middle School Campus

Poplar Bluff, Missouri - The Poplar Bluff R-I School District has further opened its doors to the Boys and Girls Club immediately following the discovery of structural damage to the roof at the Hentz Center.

The Middle School, which is presently serving 120 club members grades 4-6 in the former band room, will add seventh grade and up in what was known as the JROTC building located between E.T. Peters Gym and Kay Porter Theater. The building will also serve as the office headquarters for the after-school program, which began moving in last week.

“Again, this highlights the incredible partnership that continues to pay dividends for our youth and our entire community,” said Chris Rushin, BGC executive director. “The (school) administration and the Board of Education share our mission.”

For over a decade, the BGC has operated out of the Hentz Center on South C Street, which the district leases in good faith to the organization for \$1 per month. The Hentz Center, originally donated by Bluff City Apostolic Worship Center, once served as the district’s alternative school.

“While the Hentz Center has admirably served the needs of this community for many years, circumstances dictate that we must find alternatives to meet the demands of our

youth,” BGC Board President Brock Littles wrote in an issued statement following the incident. “We would like to extend our deepest thanks to the entire Hentz family and Poplar Bluff School District as we look toward a solution to our immediate challenge and long-term plans for the future of the Boys and Girls Club of Poplar Bluff.”

The BGC will go from 5,400 to 7,700 square feet at its new location. The club will share access to the gym, as well as Bacon Park for recreational activities. Until the facility is up and running, there are about 50 students utilizing the former Teen Center across the street from Hentz in the church annex.

Attendance at the club was 413 as of Wednesday, Sept. 21, according to Rushin. Last year’s start of school attendance was 364 members. Rushin expects the headcount to increase to 450 once the fall sports season ends at Junior High.

“The bottom line is they’re our kids, as in our community’s kids,” said Rod Priest, R-I assistant superintendent of business. “Being more centrally located for the majority of our community will provide an opportunity for more of our kids to be engaged in after-school activities.”

Shown in the photos: Robbie Toth (left), BGC unit director, and Director of Development Abbey Heuser begin moving in to their new home on Thursday, Sept. 22.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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Washer and Dryer Set Added to Life Skills Class

SEPTEMBER 28TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Washer and Dryer Set Added to Life Skills Class

Poplar Bluff, Missouri - Poplar Bluff Junior High has been able to add a washer and dryer to its life skills classroom, thanks to a generous donation made last week by Fellowship General Baptist Church, leaders of which are represented on the Bright Futures Site Council.

How to wash and dry clothing has been taught in life skills for three years, but now the task can be put into action, SWIN teacher Steven Frey said. The Whirlpool appliance set will also be used to wash school-issued backpacks, as well as the gym clothes of students perhaps without regular access to a washer and dryer, according to Bright Futures Site Coordinator Lybby Mannon.

Shown in the photo: Lybby Mannon (left) and assistant Krista Yarbrow of the Junior High Bright Futures Site Council pose beside the washer and dryer set that the school was able to purchase from Hefner Furniture & Appliance with a \$1,000 donation.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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Middle School Adds First Dedicated STEM Course

SEPTEMBER 27TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Middle School Adds First Dedicated STEM Course

Poplar Bluff, Missouri - A new STEM class that has been added to the Poplar Bluff Middle School curriculum is quickly gaining popularity among students.

“My daughter came home talking about this. She loves this class,” exclaimed Mary Arnold, the mother of fourth grader Chloe, on the Middle School Facebook page. Trina Weldon of the fifth grade commented: “My favorite class ever.”

The enrichment class—which combines science, technology, engineering and mathematics—was one of the driving forces behind the buildings plan that has added 40,000 square feet to the relocated campus. Taught by Keri Jameson and Cody Young, STEM takes the place of computer lab since Google Chromebook carts are being made available in all classrooms of the upper elementary school.

“Hands on, minds on,” explained Young, a fifth year teacher. “It’s how kids learn.”

When Jameson began teaching in 2009—METS—a reversal of the acronym, was the buzzword in education, she recalled. In an effort to prepare the students for a modern-day work environment, Jameson—much like Young—has always tried to apply project-based learning in her classroom lessons.

Now with a dedicated class, the pair of educators are delighted to be able to introduce tools such as Spheros, iPads, and 3-D scanners and printers, plus Lego and circuit board stations to teach critical thinking. “This is the best job I have ever had,” Jameson stated. “It’s the last teaching job I’ll have.”

Having focused solely on science in previous years, Young and Jameson spent the summer planning their new interdisciplinary activities. Just weeks into the school year, they are already inspiring more STEM action throughout the district.

At Eugene Field, elementary school educators are in the planning stages of converting their vacated art room in the older part of campus into a STEM lab, according to Principal Jennifer Taylor.

Upon completing over 50 pages of research, Ashley Woolard, a Junior High science teacher, received her certification through the National Institute for STEM Education earlier this month. She too is planning to introduce “whole brain teaching” into her curriculum, she said.

Shown in the photo are teachers Keri Jameson and Cody Young are the district’s first dedicated STEM teachers.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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Elks Lodge Donates Back-to-School Supplies

SEPTEMBER 26TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Elks Lodge Donates Back-to-School Supplies

Poplar Bluff, Missouri - The Elks Lodge recently donated \$2,500 to the Middle School for the purchase of supplies including backpacks, Trapper Keepers and pencil cases for students in need.

The bulk of the funds were awarded through the Community Investments Program of the Elks National Foundation and Poplar Bluff Lodge No. 2452 contributed the rest, according to Mac Campbell, past exalted ruler.

Shown in the photos are: Middle School counselor Julie Withrow; IEP facilitator Cindy McIver; students Travis Vaughn, James Wilder, Xaviese Jackson, Brooke Montgomery, Jamaya Hamilton, Carmelo Perkins and Kathryn Montgomery; and Elks Debbie and Mac Campbell.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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Do Good Campaign Does Well

SEPTEMBER 15TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Do Good Campaign Does Well

Poplar Bluff, Missouri - Stand Still Apparel in cooperation with Ozark Federal Credit Union has given out free T-shirts to the entire Poplar Bluff R-I staff to show their appreciation as the new school year kicks into gear.

The gesture was part of the clothing company's monthly Do Good Campaign, which was established last year to recognize community organizations, according to co-founder Mark Wilson. Stand Still provides the labor pro bono, and partners with a business to subsidize the cost of the shirts.

"It's a great way to say 'thank you' to the school system," stated Business Development Specialist Davine Conover of Ozark FCU.

Shown in the photo: Stand Still Apparel and representatives of Ozark FCU hand-delivered a T-shirt to Poplar Bluff High School Assistant Principal Sheldon Tyler on Friday, Sept 9. (From left) Tim Strohmeier, Mike Crumley, Sheldon Tyler, Mark Wilson and Chad Wolfram.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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