

Local Schools



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The Giving Closet

DECEMBER 08TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

The Giving Closet

Poplar Bluff, Missouri - Poplar Bluff High School students in need of an article of clothing, a personal hygiene product or a classroom supply now have a discrete place to go directly on campus to seek relief.

The Giving Closet has been established this academic year in the library. The operation is managed by Librarian Marci Priest, who maintains inventory through donations and receives help stocking shelves from student volunteers.

School board member Alana Robertson, who also serves on the Bright Futures advisory, read about the Little Bit Foundation, a cost-free boutique for poverty-stricken schools in St. Louis. She was able to further gather information from a relative at an educational institution in Florida with a comparable operation.

“It’s the whole premise of Bright Futures and I thought, ‘How wonderful if we can do something similar,’ because we all have kids that need our help,” Robertson said. The mission of Bright Futures is to help meet the basic needs of students through community partnerships with the business sector, human service agencies, faith-based organizations and parent groups.

The high school site council for the nonprofit took its first tour of the Giving Closet on Wednesday, Nov. 25. While discussions began last school year, plans for full implementation were put on hold until a designated space was made available at the new Oak Grove facility.

“In the past (lacking an element of anonymity) might have prevented us from meeting the needs of a child who may not want to come to school because they would freeze to death with no coat, or they don’t want their stomach growling until lunch because they didn’t eat supper, or they don’t have clean clothes,” R-I Attendance Officer Misty Dodson explained. “For a child to be able to just walk in and say, ‘I need this,’ cuts down on the potential negative feeling they may have in regard to their circumstances.”

Items presently in demand, according to overseers, include gently worn winter gear appropriate for high school students, undergarments and feminine products. For more information, contact the high school directly at 573-785-6471, or message the Bright Futures Poplar Bluff page on Facebook.

Shown in the photos: PBHS Librarian Marci Priest displays a tote of granola bars donated by Poplar Bluff Regional Medical Center.

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

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6th Pink-Out Day Raises \$20K

NOVEMBER 21ST 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

6th Pink-Out Day Raises \$20K

Poplar Bluff, Missouri - A total of \$20,000 was raised for the United Cancer Assistance Network during the sixth annual Pink-Out Day, which concluded Friday, Oct. 14, at the Mules Football game.

Pink-Out Day is a citywide observance founded by the Poplar Bluff High School Student Council. Citizens participate in a T-shirt fundraiser, the proceeds of which go toward UCAN, a nonprofit organization that provides monetary assistance for local patients receiving cancer treatment.

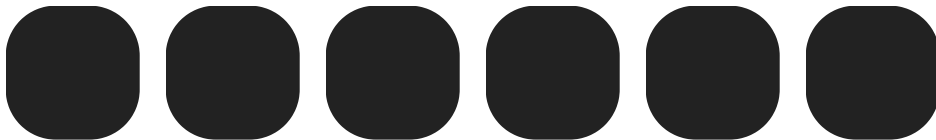
In the photo: Wearing their Pink-Out Day T-shirts to school, students and staff members present a check to UCAN in the PBHS commons area.

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

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Elementary School Recognizes STARS

NOVEMBER 21ST 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Elementary School Recognizes STARS

Poplar Bluff, Missouri - Oak Grove Elementary has joined Lake Road and Eugene Field in implementing the Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support program designed to reward students who are meeting and exceeding building expectations.

Through the new program that goes by the acronym STARS, students who are spotted by staff doing something exceptional earn points which they can use to purchase prizes in a makeshift store set up monthly. Classes can also earn reward parties. The store is funded by the Parent Teacher Organization as well as the Latch-Key program.

“If you put in those positive expectations, maybe you’ll ward off the negative behavior by bringing more attention to the good things,” Principal Jenifer Richardson explained. “It feels good to be praised so other students take notice.”

Upon meeting the required staff buy-in quota, Richardson and a team of colleagues attended a summer training institute in 2015 and proceeded to collect data last school year. Implementation of the action plan kicked off this year with an Olympic-themed boot camp that was designed for students to rotate through stations that defined expectations in various school settings such as the lunchroom and the bus.

The final component of the program is the Monday morning celebration during which students learn their behavioral focus of the week. Students are encouraged to wear their STARS T-shirts supplied by school sponsor Poplar Bluff Realty.

Richardson credits her staff for the early success of the program. First grade teacher

Sheila Henderson commented that she enjoys “starting the week on such a positive note.” The biggest benefit third grade teacher Hilary Taylor sees, she added, is the “consistency of the new building-wide approach to classroom management.”

STARS stands for: The expectation is for our Star students to Take responsibility, Always be safe, Respect yourself and others, and Strive to do your best.

Promoting the STARS program are students (from left) Alexis Jameson, Laynie Riggins, Emma McCracken, Kale Caudel, Kinley Young, Samantha Painter, Cayden Innes and Zada Camden.

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

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Science Students Have a Blast

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Poplar Bluff, Missouri - Poplar Bluff Junior High students concluded their unit on the scientific method with a rocket launch on Thursday, Oct. 27, at Fred M. Morrow Stadium.

Rocket Day was founded several years ago by retired science teacher Vic Clark, who still returns for the occasion to help operate his homemade compressed air launcher. Eighth graders later make qualitative and quantitative observations about the data.

Prior to the event this year, students watched “October Sky,” which was inspired by Homer Hickam Jr., a NASA engineer, who actually wrote a personal letter to the class after teacher Ashley Woolard connected with him via Twitter.

“Best wishes to you and remember, if you never have dreams, they never come true. Aim high,” Hickam stated and included an autographed self-portrait, which he addressed to Poplar Bluff Schools.

Shown in the photo: Makaya Mitchell launches her rocket under the instruction of Vic Clark.

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

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Bright Futures Celebrates Success Stories

NOVEMBER 03RD 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Bright Futures Celebrates Success Stories

Poplar Bluff, Missouri - Chartwells School Dining Services announced it has opted to take over the long-standing Backpacks for Friday program for the Bread Shed during the third annual Bright Futures symposium on Friday, Oct. 28, at the Gamma HealthCare Conference Center.

The reinstated program will supply district families in need with food for the weekend beginning on New Year's Day, according to Food Services Director Dixie Harden. 'Mule Packs' is just one of many programs being coordinated under the Bright Futures umbrella that was highlighted at the event.

"With a lever this large, we can move the world," stated Poplar Bluff R-I Superintendent Scott Dill before an estimated audience of 125, including district personnel, parents, business leaders, church officials and partners in the social services sector.

Run by R-I social workers, Bright Futures Poplar Bluff is a nonprofit that, through community partnerships, helps to meet the basic physical needs of students so they can focus on academics. The district became affiliated with the national organization headquartered in Joplin in 2014.

Each school within the district has a site council that works to identify the specific needs of their studentbody. Council members reported about some of the program successes such as the Red Bookshelf Project organized at Oak Grove Elementary and the free senior photos a philanthropist offered at the Graduation Center.

Lake Road Site Council member Raymond Webb said that he arranged to give a basketball to each student in the Basketball Club, one of many organizations that elementary students could now choose to join during Club Day. “It’s small to some, but to those kids it’s a real big deal,” said Webb, who is the assistant manager at Wal-Mart.

“Intelligence isn’t the obstacle to graduation, life is,” added High School Principal Mike Kiehne, who announced that librarian Marcia Priest has started a Giving Closet with clothing and other items.

“They’re not asking for thousands and thousands of dollars,” noted Eugene Field Site Council member Michelle Shelton, human resources manager at Briggs & Stratton. “They’re asking for little things... It truly does make a difference.”

To learn how to get involved, ‘like’ Bright Futures Poplar Bluff on Facebook at www.facebook.com/BrightFuturesPB.

Shown in the photo: Maclaren Moore of O’Neal Elementary watches an introductory video about the Bright Futures program.

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

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