

Local Schools



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PBMS Giving Closet Opens for Students in Need

SEPTEMBER 29TH 2020 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Poplar Bluff, MO - A sixth grade teacher working toward a counseling degree has realized her vision at the Poplar Bluff Middle School this school year, having opened a Giving Closet free for students in need.

With help from family and co-workers, Taytem Eudaley built shelving and racks, and organized inventory that includes clothing, personal hygiene items and school supplies in what once served as the boys' locker room next to E.T. Peters Gym.

Students are referred by teachers or counselors, then they present a voucher to Eudaley, who discreetly takes them 'shopping' at the start of the school day, she said.

"My first year teaching I saw a lot of kids didn't have the bare necessities, and just know you're starting your day at a disadvantage if you're struggling [outside]," Eudaley explained. "This allows us to give anonymously so kids can focus on school stuff instead of home stuff, and they don't have to bring with them that emotional backpack."

At the end of 2019, Eudaley was provided a small budget from administration to purchase bulk supplies such as body wash, and she began soliciting donations through her parish, West Side Church of God, as well as reaching out to other school patrons.

The custodial staff originally built a coat rack, and then over the summer Eudaley completed the layout with assistance from loved ones. There is a separate space that she uses to sort items as they come in. Previously the school had stored some supplies in the nurse's office, according to Eudaley, but the collection was not on display for students to

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“It was a bit of a mess before with donations lying around, and she basically washed all the clothes and built the shelves over the summer as a project for her master’s program,” said Dr. Josh Teeter, Middle School principal. “The main purpose is to provide clothing for kids who don’t have the means available.”

Some items on the current needs list include toothbrushes and toothpaste, clothing hangers, gently-used backpacks and young adult books, according to Eudaley. She is eventually looking to secure a washer and dryer once a hookup is installed.

The Middle School Giving Closet is modeled in part after a similar operation that runs out of the High School library. Both accept items through the main office of the respective school buildings.

Pictured: Teacher Taytem Eudaley stands next to a Mules display section in the PBMS Giving Closet.

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

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