



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TEACHERS' DONATION BENEFITS CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

Uniontown, PA – The Uniontown Area Education Association has strengthened its relationship with Fayette County Children and Youth Services.

With a goal of family reunification, CYS works to ensure county children's safety by investigating allegations of abuse and neglect. Its extensive programming provides children and teenagers with the resources and life skills necessary for future success.

After donating luggage and other items to CYS' independent living program last year, Uniontown teachers have once again forgone the traditional monetary donation for something more personal.

CYS Deputy Administrator John Fritts said the teachers often see some of the same students in their classroom that his organization works with and understand the struggles they face.

"The kids are always at the center of what they do, as far as helping people," Fritts said. "This particular donation is different because, a lot of times, we're given donations - like toys at Christmastime - that are great for putting smiles on kids' faces. However, we're not usually getting what we really need."

The more than 200 teachers' union members donated numerous "care bags," specifically assembled for boys and girls ages 0 to 4-years-old who have been removed from their parents and placed into foster care.

"Just today, we had three kids come to us under the age of 4 and they had nothing with them," Fritts said. "It was so wonderful to be able to give them a backpack that was specifically made up for kids their age. It's something tangible that they can take with them through the process and means a little bit more to them in their time of need."

The teachers' efforts have been organized annually by Education Association President Doug Zajac, who previously said he and his fellow educators chose to donate to CYS after learning children often come to them with nothing, or with a few personal belongings stuffed into garbage bags.

"We've been very fortunate to know Doug for several years now," Fritts said. "These Uniontown Area School District teachers have been fantastic to us. They've been incredible, and they're always trying to do just a little bit more to help, so it's really nice to have a partner in the community like that."

One goal both CYS employees and teachers share is keeping the children they serve safe. In honor of that dedication to youth protection, CYS will host an event at 11 a.m. tomorrow on the grounds of the Fayette County Courthouse in Uniontown.

The event is part of National Child Abuse Prevention Month, which is observed throughout April.

Fritts said all are invited to join his organization in raising awareness during the short festivities, which will involve placing flags in the ground for each child abused in Fayette County in 2018. There will also be a larger sign that explains what the flags are planted for, he added.

For more information on the event, the donation, or how you can support Fayette County Children and Youth Services, email John Fritts at jfritts@fccys.org. For more information on the Uniontown Area Education Association, email dzajac3@gmail.com.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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