

NEWS RELEASE

United Way of
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LOCAL AGENCIES PARTNER TO ‘STUFF THE BUS’ FOR SCHOOL KIDS IN NEED

Community Can Donate New School Supplies or Text to Give

JACKSON, Michigan [Aug. 2, 2018] – Back-to-school time isn’t just a downer for kids; financially vulnerable families find it harder every year to afford school supplies. Now a group of local agencies is encouraging the community to donate supplies so all children in Jackson County can start the school year with the right tools to learn.

Known as Stuff The Bus, the school supply drive takes place Aug. 13-17. The effort brings together four organizations: United Way of Jackson County, the Jackson Human Relations Commission, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in Jackson County, and the Martin Luther King Community Center. These agencies, along with the Jackson County Intermediate School District and other sponsors, will offer a total of 20 dropbox locations across Jackson County. Some will park a school bus at their location so residents can drop off newly purchased school supplies.

Those who don’t have time to shop can donate by credit card by texting STUFF to 40403, with 100 percent of those gifts going to purchase school supplies.

Items will be distributed to students through local school districts, the upcoming Back to School Bash at the King Center, and the DHHS foster care youth program.

According to the National Retail Federation, back-to-school purchases are taking an ever-bigger bite out of household budgets. On average, standard school supplies alone—not including clothing or electronics—cost families 47 percent more this year than a decade ago.

“In Jackson County, 36 percent of households are either in poverty or ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed),” said Ken Toll, President and CEO of United Way of Jackson County. “These families struggle to make ends meet at best, so even a small increase in the cost of school supplies makes a tough situation far tougher.

“By trying to bring together every partner, we can make sure that school supplies go to the most vulnerable children and families in our community,” he added.

Jackson County Commissioner Daniel Mahoney, who is coordinating the King Center’s Back to School Bash, said, “While school supply drives have happened before, this is the first time these agencies have worked together to inspire more support and make it easier to donate.”

Stuff The Bus will accept the following donated items:

- New backpacks
- Pencil pouches
- Glue sticks and glue bottles
- Highlighters
- Markers and Sharpies
- Crayons
- Colored pencils
- Pencils and erasers
- Pencil sharpeners
- Red pens
- Notebooks
- Boxes of tissues (Kleenex, Puffs, etc.)
- Hand sanitizer
- Scissors

“Stuff The Bus represents the kind of partnership our community depends on to fight poverty and help all people in Jackson County succeed,” said Zoe Lyons, DHHS Director in Jackson County. “We’re calling on all residents to help us by donating a few school supplies and showing a child that they care.”

Stuff The Bus will accept donations starting Aug. 6 at dropboxes at the following locations:

- United Way of Jackson County, 536 E. Jackson St.

- Buffalo Wild Wings, 1247 Boardman Rd.
- County National Bank, all locations in Jackson County
- Flagstar Bank, all locations in Jackson County
- Henry Ford Allegiance Health at One Jackson Square
- Henry Ford Allegiance Health Gift Shop, 205 N East Ave.
- Martin Luther King Community Center, 1107 Adrian St.
- MI Department of Health & Human Services, 301 E. Louis Glick Hwy.
- TAC Manufacturing – Employee Drop-Off – 4111 County Farm Rd.

The bus itself will appear throughout Jackson County during the week of Aug. 13-17:

- Aug. 13, 10 a.m.-noon, at United Way of Jackson County, 536 E. Jackson St.
- Aug. 14, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., at Buffalo Wild Wings, 1247 Boardman Rd.; and 2-4 p.m., at TAC Manufacturing, 4111 County Farm Rd.
- Aug. 16, 2-4 p.m., at Henry Ford Allegiance Health Professional Building, 205 N. East Ave.
- Aug. 17, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., at County National Bank, corner of Jackson and Washington St.; and 1:30-5 p.m. at United Way, 536 E. Jackson St.

More information is available online at <http://www.uwjackson.org/stuff-the-bus/> and on Facebook at <facebook.com/uwjacksonMI>.

Sponsors of Stuff The Bus include the four partner organizations plus Buffalo Wild Wings, County National Bank, Flagstar, Henry Ford Allegiance Health, Jackson County Intermediate School District, TAC Manufacturing, and Two Men And A Truck.

About United Way of Jackson County

United Way of Jackson County mobilizes people, organizations and funds to create a community rich in opportunities to eliminate poverty and allow all people to achieve financial stability and success. We are committed to helping 5,000 Jackson County residents develop a pathway to financial success by 2025. Visit our website at uwjackson.org, or follow us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram.

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