

NEWS

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ASSISTANCE LEAGUE OF ST. LOUIS NOW STOCKS CLOSETS OFFERING CLOTHING AND MORE TO 4,800 CHILDREN IN 17 SAINT LOUIS CITY SCHOOLS

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY: Members of the media are invited to visit Adams Elementary School at 1311 Tower Grove Ave. to check out a new closet on Tuesday, November 27, from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. **School children will be checking out the new closet and available for tape or photos.** Media will also be able to speak to Michael Brown, Deputy Superintendent of Student Support Services, and Jeffrey Rhone, Director, Office of Family and Community Engagement, both of the Saint Louis Public School District, and Adams School Principal Felicia Miller. Assistance League of St. Louis President Roxie Randolph and other Assistant League leaders will be available for interviews.

Assistance League of St. Louis today announces the opening of 17 fully equipped closets in Saint Louis Public Schools to provide basic clothing needs even more quickly to deserving children.

This delivery model will serve more than 4,800 elementary school students and is a new approach for this organization, which annually touches the lives of more than 44,000 St. Louisans and has provided help to deserving children and adults for more than 30 years.

Each school closet now has new coats, school uniforms, jackets, underwear, socks, hats, gloves and toiletry items. All schools will have a book event when each child will receive one or more books to keep. In addition, if requested, Assistance League volunteers will bring new shoes to participating schools. Through its program that delivers plush bears and activity kits to children in hospital emergency rooms and crisis centers, Assistance League is also providing plush bears and activity kits for each school closet.

Closets can now be found in these city of St. Louis elementary schools: Adams, Ames, George Washington Carver, Dunbar, Ford, Froebel, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lexington, Meramec, Monroe, Oak Hill, Gilkey Pamoja at Cole, Shaw, Shenandoah, Woerner and Woodward.

"Research shows that being clothed appropriately and warm means a great deal to the ability of children to feel accepted and comfortable in school and to learn," said Assistance League of St. Louis President Roxie Randolph. "Our hope is that we can expand our closets to many more schools in the near future because school officials have told us that there is so much turnover with children coming and going throughout the school year, our once-a-year, long-time model no longer completely serves all the children who need our help."

"With this new approach, Assistance League can supply services to a school throughout the year to allow students to focus on their studies rather than basic needs," Randolph added.

This real-time initiative for providing needed clothing and other support was created as an addition to the organization's well-known Operation School Bell Program, which involves bringing students to Assistance League headquarters for fittings. Through Operation School Bell, Assistance League volunteers contributed 5,700 hours last year to give each student 22 items: two pairs of pants, two short-sleeve and one long-sleeve shirt, one fleece jacket, six pair of socks, six pair of underwear, a toothbrush, toothpaste, a hat and gloves (and for each girl—a headband or a bow) and a belt. Each student also receives a book of the child's choice. The school nurse receives deodorant, socks, underwear, sports bras and camisoles for their use during the school year. During the 2017-2018 school year, the organization served 7,834 elementary school students. In 2018, children are coming to the organization's headquarters for fittings from 30 schools in Ferguson-Florissant, Hazelwood, Jennings, Normandy, Riverview Gardens and St. Louis City districts.

New athletic shoes are fitted on approximately 3,500 St. Louis area school children each year by Assistance League volunteers who travel to more than three dozen elementary schools in several St. Louis city and county districts. Assistance League volunteers will continue to conduct fitting days for each of the 17 schools with closets.

ABOUT ASSISTANCE LEAGUE OF ST. LOUIS. Assistance League of St. Louis is run by an all-volunteer group of more than 500 volunteers. The organization's mission is to identify, develop, fund and implement ongoing philanthropic programs to serve specific needs of children and adults in the St. Louis community. In 2017 alone, Assistance League members and friends donated 80,000 volunteer hours through nine philanthropic programs, touching more than 44,000 lives. Each program has a special focus from providing new school uniforms to shoes and socks and from personal care items for crisis shelter clients to teddy bears for comfort. All funds raised are returned to the St. Louis community. Assistance League of St. Louis is an accredited charity of the Better Business Bureau and has achieved a Platinum Transparency Rating from GuideStar.

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