



Load up the Red Wagon

In support of the company's annual Red Wagon Project promoting back-to-school efforts in the community, 1st Summit Bank of Cresson offered a donation of school supplies collected by the bank to Communities in Schools of the Laurel Highlands, which will put the donation to good use in its Center for Families. From left: CISLH Center for Families Director Sue Sheehan, CISLH Executive Director Mickie Eberhart, 1st Summit Manager Chris Hines, Sales Representative Sherry Thomas, and Customer Service Representative Anna Swires. Photo by Justin Eger.

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Ebensburg Mayor Randy Datsko, his wife Cindy, CISLH Site Coordinator Chelsea Brink and CISLH Executive Director Sue Sheehan worked hard to provide assistance for 50 local families through CISLH and the Salvation Army. Submitted photo.

CISLH and Salvation Army team up

By Nichole Boland
of Mainline Newspapers

Recently, the Center for Families at Communities in Schools of the Laurel Highlands partnered with the Salvation Army to help local families in need. By working together, the two organizations bought \$2,300 worth of laundry detergent, toothpaste, toilet paper, dish soap, hand soap, and shampoo, and then donated it all to 50 area families.

Communities in Schools of the Laurel Highlands (CISLH) is a local non-profit organization founded in 1999. They offer after-school programs to youth and adolescents who attend Blacklick Valley, Central Cambria, Cambria Heights, Penn Cambria, and Northern Cambria School Districts. These after-school programs allow students to get academic assistance (tutoring and homework help), enrichment programs involving many community partners, and a recreation component which includes many physical and nutritional activities. There are also evidence-based programs that help with the prevention of drugs and alcohol. Since 1999,

CISLH has been able to serve over 2,000 students.

The Salvation Army provides funding to CISLH to help with the Center for Families program. This program offers assistance to local families in need by helping with utility bills, groceries, rent, places to stay in a time of crisis, and referring families to different agencies in order to receive the proper help they may need. This year, the Salvation Army provided the CISLH's Center for Families with a major expenditure of \$2,300. Sue Sheehan, executive director of CISLH, and Randy Datsko, mayor of Ebensburg, took this money and spent several hours at Wal-mart shopping for the basic household items. Together, they hauled the carts full of items back to the Admiral Peary Vo-Tech building, where the Center for Families is located.

"People don't realize that Food Stamps do not cover anything but consumables. These are items that people really need to live," explained Sheehan.

"We wanted to make an impact for more than a day or two," says Sheehan. This shopping trip provided the families with necessities to help them through the

next month or longer. Families who received these items were overjoyed, some even broke down in tears. Basic items, ones that many people take for granted, lifted the spirits of the recipients. For example, they were provided with Dawn dish liquid rather than dish liquid from the dollar store brand. Those who are capable of buying name-brand household items do not realize how much better they work than the dollar store brand.

With the holidays soon approaching, shoppers will begin seeing Salvation Army volunteers standing outside local businesses, collecting money. It's easy for people to walk by the people ringing bells and simply ignore them. What many people don't know is that 90 percent of the money that is collected stays right in Ebensburg. The money collected helps only people in surrounding areas. With that said, this holiday season, if you have some spare change, and you see someone standing out in the snowy weather ringing a bell, think twice before you avoid eye contact and walk into the store. The money you donate will help your neighbors in need.

RSG's Center For Families Household Goods Donation 2013



Randy Datsko, Ebensburg mayor, and Sue Sheehan, RSG vice president, unload cleaning supplies to be donated to local families in need.