

A collection of colorful school supplies including pencils, a ruler, paper clips, and a highlighter, arranged along the top edge of the page.

CHALK IT UP TO LOVE

EAST



WINGATE
UNIVERSITY
Founded in 1896



Teachers having to pay out of their own pockets in order to meet the needs of their students is a nation-wide phenomenon. According to multiple sources, 94% of public school teachers use their own money for school-related necessities. In Union County, Heart for Monroe is attempting to address this issue through the Chalk It Up to Love program. There are two Chalk It Up to Love locations: one in central Monroe and one at Wingate Baptist Church. These locations serve as Chalk It Up to Love - Central and Chalk It Up to Love - East respectively. This paper focuses on Chalk It Up to Love - East, illustrating its impact as well as some of the challenges experienced during its initial months of operation.



The main issue that has been observed up until now is soliciting enough donations in order to keep up with the demand for school supplies from teachers. Another minor issue is attempting to find a more organized and streamlined process for packing school supply bags, especially for large groups of volunteers.



Above: CCG Student Intern, Isabella Walle, in charge of this amazing drive!



Background

Chalk It Up to Love - East is a *Heart for Monroe* program focusing on supporting UCPS teachers in Title I schools via school supply donations. *Heart for Monroe* is a nonprofit organization established in 2014; its primary goal is to unite churches, businesses, organizations, and individuals to address homelessness, hunger, education, and relationships within the surrounding community. Shortly after *Heart for Monroe* was established, *Chalk It Up to Love - Central* was created to provide school supplies to six Title I schools: Benton Heights Elementary, Rock Rest Elementary, East Elementary, Walter Bickett Elementary, Monroe Middle, and Monroe High. After observing the tremendous impact of *Chalk It Up to Love - Central* on these Title I schools, the *Chalk* program was expanded to the eastern portion of the county. Thus, *Chalk It Up to Love - East* was born in the summer of 2019.

Chalk It Up to Love - East provides school supplies to four Title I schools in the eastern part of Union County: Marshville Elementary, Wingate Elementary, East Union Middle, and Forest Hills High. *Chalk It Up to Love* supplies all the major school-related items needed for students to be successful in the classroom, such as pencils, notebooks, coloring utensils, erasers, loose leaf paper, binders, and so on and so forth. In addition to these items, *Chalk It Up to Love* takes it a step further by providing classroom library books for teachers to choose from when they arrive at their specified school supply distribution locations (for *Chalk - East*, this is Wingate Baptist Church).

Miscellaneous items, such as classroom posters, stickers, etc. are offered on a first-come, first-serve basis. *Chalk It Up to Love* also provides teachers with certain supplies to promote classroom hygiene, including tissues, hand sanitizer, and paper towels. For *Chalk - East*, teachers indicate which items they need through an online ordering form, which is submitted a week before their orders are packed. The list of items *Chalk It Up to Love* offers to teachers is vast, and with the large number of teachers needing school supplies, it is often difficult to keep up with the demand. Furthermore, since there are so many supplies to keep up with, it can sometimes be challenging to find a more organized way for large groups of volunteers to pack school supply bags.



Logistics



This program began in the summer of 2019 and is based out of a newly designed area in Wingate Baptist Church that houses both the Collaborative for the Common Good and Chalk It Up to Love. This area is specifically configured to suit the needs of Chalk - East; there is a locked storage room where school supply donations are kept and a foyer area outside the locked room where school supply bag packing takes place. Within the storage room, school supplies are separated by type and are kept in individual boxes/on individual shelves. In the foyer area, there are wheeled tables that can be moved according to Chalk's needs, which allows for assembly-line style school supply bag packing. There is also a whiteboard on which all packing information can be written and seen clearly by volunteers. Teachers submit their orders via a Google Form, which is then inputted into a Google spreadsheet to keep track of order histories.

The Road So Far...



\$9,800 -[Monetary Donations

\$2,500 -[Supply Donations



Approximately **590 Volunteer Hours**



Volunteers came from:

Wingate University, Marshville, Unionville,
Monroe, Indian Trail, Stallings and Waxhaw.

177 school supply bags for:

Wingate Elementary, East Union Middle,
Forest Hill High, and Union Elementary.



Faculty Feedback

Examples of some of the feedback we have received from the teachers about *Chalk It Up To Love – East* include:

"I am so thankful for all of these school supplies. This is my first year teaching and I had no idea how I was going to be able to afford all the things I needed for my classroom."

"This program is so much more than school supplies. It is so wonderful to know that we as teachers are appreciated for what we're trying to do each and every day in our classroom."

"Where has [this program] been my entire career? I can't tell you how much these supplies mean to me and the students in my classroom."

Continuing Forward!

In order to address the need for more donations, the first step should be to create a more pronounced social media presence for the program. Increased social media exposure will allow the word to spread about the program and its needs, and will also highlight its impact within the community. In addition to this, Chalk leaders can take time to organize more school supply drives within churches, schools, businesses, and other organizations. Monetary donations can also be accepted and added to the preexisting Heart for Monroe budget if a school supply drive is not possible. Finally, in order to better organize volunteers and make the most of their time, they can be divided into groups when serving on Packing Days. One group can count new school supply donations, and the other group can fill orders in an assembly-line fashion, thus making the effort much more efficient than it would be otherwise.



Help *Chalk it Up to Love – East* by contacting Student Intern Leader Isabella Walle at is.walle557@wingate.edu or the Collaborative for the Common Good (CCG) at ccg@wingate.edu

References:

Chokshi, Niraj. "94 Percent of U.S. Teachers Spend Their Own Money on School Supplies, Survey Finds." *The New York Times*, 16 May 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/05/16/us/teachers-school-supplies.html.

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