



Seneca Valley School District

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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<photo attached: Kendall Hancox, William Gillespie, Miles Bowman take a break from stocking the shelves and are just a few of the many volunteers who helped to get the store off the ground.>

IN SCHOOL AND 'ON THE HOUSE'

JACKSON TWP., PA (Nov. 22, 2021)- The well-worn phrase “many hands make light work” has taken on a whole new meaning.

Numerous Seneca Valley staff members and students have joined forces to launch the opening of the **No Cost to Shop** store which officially opened Nov. 1.

This is a new store located in the senior high school for students in grades 7-12 who are in need of clothing, food or other items, and are welcome to set up a private time to shop and take what they need – no lines, no checkout.

Last year, Michelle Eppinger, a Seneca Valley Senior High School (SHS) special education job coach paraprofessional, went to senior high school administrators with concerns that some students had additional needs that were not being met due to the pandemic. From there, her vision of a “brick and mortar” store, along with many others, came together and turned this vision into a reality.

Ms. Eppinger, along with SV job coaches, teachers, maintenance workers and various students have been hard at work collecting donations, as well as sorting, folding and categorizing various hygiene items. They were buoyed in June when the Seneca Valley Foundation (SVF) donated \$3,000 to assist with the store’s needs, specifically with store fixtures, furniture, racks and décor.

To expand the store and evolve the program even more, Seneca Valley Transition Planning, Career and Vocational Education Coordinator Jess Pyle involved Community Based Vocational Training (CBVT) and Vocational Readiness students and their job coaches. These students currently run the store by taking inventory, checking donation boxes, doing laundry and -best of all- gaining real work experience.

“It is great to see the collaboration of all students working together towards one common goal, said Ms. Pyle. “The students in Vocational Readiness and CBVT are gaining employability skills that they can transfer into the community, while providing students in need essential daily living items. Overall, many students are benefiting from No Cost to Shop. It is a positive outcome for everyone involved.”

The last detail was ensuring shoppers took part in an authentic retail experience. Students from Jason Woolslare's art classes designed and painted a screen to add artistic flair to the space and SHS teacher Bruce Clark made and donated a bench for students to use when trying on shoes.

So how can you help? The **No Cost to Shop** store is always looking for donations. There is a bin located in captured entrance of the senior high school near the main office. See specific needs below. *We ask that donations are new or gently used items. Thank you.*

Specific Needs:

- Hairbrushes
- Hangers
- New hygiene products
- Men's clothing
- Shoes

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