

Rotary

Club of Front Royal



Bret Hrbek, President

NEWS RELEASE

Rotary Club of Front Royal to Partner Again with the Warren County Department of Social Services to Provide Coats to Needy Children in the Community

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Front Royal – The Rotary Club of Front Royal announced this week that it is partnering with the Warren County Department of Social Services again in 2019 to purchase coats for kids through Operation Warm. Last year, as part of the Club’s annual Doc Smith Christmas Basket Program, which provided 120 boxes of food to needy families in the Front Royal-Warren County community, the Club gave out 87 coats to children in need identified by the Department of Social Services.

According to Club President Bret Hrbek, “The goal of the Doc Smith Christmas Basket Program is to provide basic food staples to families in need in the community to make sure that they can have a traditional Christmas dinner. Two years ago the Club added coats to the donation last year to ensure that every child served by the program will have a new coat for Christmas.” The Doc Smith Christmas Basket program has been a long-standing program in Front Royal originated by Edgar C. “Doc” Smith, Chief of Police, in 1916. The program was named after him based on his continued service to the needy, and continues to serve 100-150 families annually throughout Warren County. A local Sorority (Psi Master Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi Sorority) had coordinated this program for approximately 30 years (1973-2003). The Sorority approached the Club in 2003 about the possibility of taking this program over, and the Club gladly did so.

Operation Warm was established in 1998 to provide coats for school children in need. For a child, a brand new winter coat can be **#morethanacoat** - it can change a child's life and empower them with greater self-confidence and increased school attendance. Operation Warm, based in Pennsylvania, manufactures and provides a thoughtfully designed collection of brand new winter coats to children in need. Additional information on Operation Warm can be found at <https://www.operationwarm.org/about-us/our-mission/> .

**The Rotary Club of Front Royal & Warren County
Department of Social Services are proud sponsors of the
Coats for Kids Program!**

**This year we will donate money and solicit donations for
this program that provides a new coat for a child that may
not otherwise have one. Your donation of \$20 will buy a
child a NEW coat.**



According to Social Services Director DeAnna Cheatham, “Partnering with Rotary Club of Front Royal provides an excellent opportunity to help children in Warren County with a basic necessity. Often people want to help their fellow community members but may be reluctant or uncertain of how they can best do that and be certain of where their donations are going. This program helps to address a real community need that faces some of our most vulnerable citizens and their families. Everyone can do something to help and this is a simple way to have a significant and direct impact. The mission of the Department of Social Services is to help people triumph over poverty, abuse and neglect. This program is just one of many services that the Department provides to help meet the ever changing needs of the community.”

County Administrator Doug Stanley who serves as the Board for Social Services and is heading up the fundraising effort for the Rotary Club added, “The idea for the effort came from the Coats for Kids Program in Winchester/Frederick County. In talking with Erik Beatley, Chairman of the Community Foundation of the Northern Shenandoah Valley and organizer of the Coats for Kids Program there, it

seemed like a great opportunity to meet a need in the Front Royal-Warren County community. We were so excited to be able to provide over 250 coats over the last two years and we are hoping that we will be able to expand the program this year and have set a preliminary target of 150-175 coats for the 2019 holiday season.”

Mr. Stanley also noted that the Club has established a permanent fund through the Community Foundation of the Northern Shenandoah Valley to collect donations for the effort. Information on making a tax-deductible donation to the fund can be found at <https://cfnsv.org/funds/coats-for-kids-front-royal-warren-county-fund/>. Stanley added that it is a great way to make a tax-deductible online donation to support the effort. With the establishment of the fund, the Club will be able to work towards long-term sustainability of the program.

Larry Weiss, Executive Director of the Community Foundation stated, “The Community Foundation of the Northern Shenandoah Valley is proud to be partnering with the Front Royal Rotary Club to create the Coats for Kids Fund. We applaud the Club’s goal to provide coats for children in need in their community. The Community Foundation exists to improve the quality of life for all of our citizens, now and for generations to come, by building community endowments, this new Coats for Kids Fund and the activity of the Front Royal Rotary align perfectly with our Foundation’s goals.”

Stanley stated that the Club is kicking off its efforts to raise \$3,000 to purchase the coats for the upcoming season while working to grow its endowed fund to support the effort moving forward. While the Club received a number of small donations last year, several businesses and individuals supported the project through direct donations and allowing donation boxes to be placed in their business during the holiday season.

Anyone interested in donating to the program can drop off donations at the following locations:

- Warren County Administration Office at the Warren County Government Center – 220 North Commerce Avenue, Suite 100
- Department of Social Services at the Health and Human Services Complex
- Various donation boxes in the community at businesses such as the Warren County Government Center, Health and Human Services Complex, United Bank, IHOP, Royal Cinemas, Royal Family Bowling Center, Royal Oak Animal Clinic, Southern States, Daily Grind, Mom’s Kitchen, Anthony’s, and the Apple House.

For additional information, please contact Michelle Smeltzer, Warren County Community Liaison, at (540) 892-6108 at michelle.smeltzer@dss.virginia.gov.

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