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Students' efforts at Salyards result in mountain of socks for homeless

By Lindsay Peyton Updated 3:19 pm, Tuesday, February 23, 2016



IMAGE 2 OF 2

Salyards Middle School teacher Angie Buck, left, organized a sock donation drive to benefit Cypress-area charities. Other sponsors of the drive were Doug Harbrueger and Kristin Forrest.

Students at **Salyards Middle School** are trying to make a big difference by focusing on a small article of clothing - socks.

Angie Buck, who teaches seventh-grade Texas history and sixth-grade world cultures at the school, challenged the campus to collect this in-demand item for those in need.

"All of the homeless shelters need socks," she said. "New socks are never donated, and they're one of the most-needed items."

The effort started at home. Buck's mother, **Kathy Watkins**, found a posting on Pinterest encouraging families to donate one pair of new socks for each family member every month. Watkins gave her daughter a plastic container to start storing socks.

It didn't take long for Buck and husband Shane to want to do more.

"We thought this could be bigger than just our family," she said.

Angie Buck asked for donations on Facebook and put a collection box on her porch.

"Within a week, we had 52 pairs of socks, just from friends," she said.

Buck decided to set a goal of gathering 1,000 pairs and brought her box to school. Her daughter, Ava, 11, attends sixth grade there and agreed to help.

"We have so much, and others don't have anything," Ava said. "It's important to help others and not just think about ourselves."

Buck's 16-year-old son, Garrett, approached friends at **Cypress Ranch High School** and then asked members of the **Fellowship of Christian Athletes**, to which he belongs, to join in.

"Our purpose should be to help each other when the other is in need," **Garrett Buck** said. "Donating a simple pair of socks is an easy way to help someone and has a big impact on the recipient."

At Salyards, students hosted an advisory competition to see which homeroom could gather the most pairs. The girls' basketball team asked for donations at a game. Whoever brought a pair would receive a raffle ticket.

Buck's co-workers, theater teacher **Doug Harbrueger** and girls athletic director **Kristin Forrest**, encouraged their students to donate.

Clare Jasso, 14, took the cause to heart.

"Putting others before ourselves is something not a lot of people do," she said. "Going out of your way to help with a drive for people in need could affect their lives a whole lot more than you think it would."

Administrators, parents and community members added to the stockpile, and the two schools gathered more than 2,500 pairs in six days.

"It started out really small and turned into a huge thing," Buck said.

The **Cypress Lakes High School** drill team, the **Sterling Stars**, also surprised her with 630 pairs. The group's director **Annette Stark** called Buck with the news.

"They had a 24-hour drive," Buck said. "It just came out of nowhere."

She plans to donate the socks to Star of **Hope and Covenant House**, but wants to see if they can get a few more pairs first.

"It's been a really fun experience to see the kids think of someone else and do something beyond what they normally do when they spend their own money," Buck said.

She explained that challenging students to take action is part of her role as an instructor.

"Being a teacher is also about giving life lessons," she said. "If my students remember to treat people well, to give to people in need, I feel like I'm a successful teacher. It's my job to deliver content, but it's my responsibility as a human to push further than that."

Buck hopes that the experience is eye-opening for the campus.

"With just one little tiny idea, we are able to affect 2,500 people," she said.

Buck plans to continue to host charitable events on campus each year.

"Whether it's another sock drive or a fundraiser for some other organization, I don't want it to stop," she said. "We're definitely talking about how to extend this."

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