

An Idea Worth Considering...

Helping Students in Need – Janet Kilgus, Chair, IEA-Retired



Region 14 & 62 retirees volunteer school supplies

Do you remember those students who never had the needed supplies for class? Think back about the kid who ran out of paper and told you that his mom couldn't go to the store until she got paid in 2 weeks. How about the little girl who said that her dad wouldn't buy her another pair of scissors? Just because we're retired doesn't mean that we've forgotten about all those children in need.

The Regions 14 and 62 Retired Chapter (mostly Livingston, McLean, and Woodford Counties) is trying to help a few kids with these needs. In our newsletter before each of our meetings we remind members to bring school supplies to be donated. We also have gotten generous contributions from Region 14 and from Region 62 to be used in buying school supplies to add to our members' donations. (After all, the donations go to needy students in their schools.) Thank you notes are sent and these groups are all recognized in our newsletter. Our Vice-President chairs the project, shopping before each meeting to spend a portion of the donated funds for school supplies to be added to the member-purchased items. We average having near \$150 worth of school supplies at each of our meetings to be packaged up in 4 to 5 backpacks or bags and taken to schools in the regions.

In the newsletter, along with the reminder to bring school supplies and a suggested list from several selected schools of items most needed, is a nomination form. A member can nominate a school of his/her choice and sign his/her name indicating the willingness to deliver to that school. Four or five schools are drawn at each meeting, depending on the amount of items available, to receive a bag of supplies. Slips drawn are thrown away, but slips not drawn are kept for the next time when additional nominations can be added. If a member is absent at a meeting when his/her slip is drawn, it is put back into the box for future meetings until the end of the year, when all unused slips are thrown away. A note is attached to each bag identifying us as the donor organization with contact information.

The surprise upon a first-time delivery is heart-warming and thank you notes and comments confirm the value of our efforts. We may not be reaching nearly all of the students in need, but every little bit helps.