

Rotary

Club of Front Royal



Rick Novak, President

NEWS RELEASE

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

For Release: Friday, December 1, 2017

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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 to purchase up to 150 coats for kids through Operation Warm. As part of the Club’s annual Doc Smith Christmas Basket Program, which last year provided 120 boxes of food to needy families in the Front Royal-Warren County Community, the Club will also be providing coats to children in need identified by the Department of Social Services.

According to Club President Rick Novak, “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. This year I am happy to report that we are adding coats to the donation to ensure that every child served by the program will have a new coat this Christmas.” The Doc Smith program has been a long-standing program in Front Royal, it was 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 Front Royal Rotary 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, “The Social Services Department is excited to be part of this community partnership. For many citizens that live in the community a warm coat is a luxury that simply cannot be afforded. It is wonderful that such a small donation provides children big and small with a new coat of their own. We are happy to improve the human condition in Warren County one coat at a time.”

County Administrator Doug Stanley who serves as the Board for Social Services and is heading up the fundraising 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 are hoping that we will be able to continue and grow this program in the future.”

Mr. Stanley also noted that the Club is in the process of raising the \$3,000 needed to purchase the 150 coats. The fundraising was given a boost by a \$1,000 donation from the Rotary Club's Embers Christmas Concert on November 30th at Warren County High School. 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 donations boxes in the community at businesses such as Royal Cinemas, Royal Family Bowling Center, United Bank, Southern States, Jennerations Hair Studio, Bens, Rural King, 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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