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DECA teams with Rotary and GIHS PTSA for Back-to-School Supply Drive

Grand Island (August 11, 2020) A positive result from the COVID-19 pandemic, which closed schools last spring, was the creation of a “Community Service Coordination Team” by three Grand Island High School student members of the school’s DECA programs.

Megan Lavis, Riley Patterson, and Bethany Kulikowski, who will be HS Juniors and officers of DECA this year, saw the need for their DECA teammates to focus on community service in addition to the entrepreneurial projects they create for local, state and national competition. As they practiced social distancing and communicated a lot through zoom since schools closed in March, they became extremely aware of fellow students and their families struggling through this pandemic. They began creating their first community service project for the 2020-21 school year last Friday after Governor Andrew Cuomo announced schools will open next month.

The High School’s DECA students will team with the Rotary Club of Grand Island and the Grand Island High School Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) for a school supply drive to support Grand Island residents who have been impacted greatly by this unprecedented pandemic. The drive, which will continue through Labor Day on September 7, is accepting the following items:

- Backpacks (large enough for a lunch box, folder and artwork)
- Large boxes of facial tissues
- Bottled Elmer’s glue
- Large Elmer’s glue sticks
- Boxes (24ct) of Crayola crayons
- Pink erasers
- Fiskar student scissors
- Sturdy traditional pencil boxes (not bag type)

Black Expo markers
Box of Ziploc sandwich slider bags (Girls only)
Box of Ziploc gallon slider bags (Boys only)
One dozen #2 pencil packages (Ticonderoga brand)
Poly folders with pockets and prong
Sturdy pocket folders

There will be item drop off bins at:

- Casey's Cabana, 1437 Ferry Road, Grand Island, NY 14072
- Dollar General, 2391 Grand Island Blvd.
- Fuccillo Automotive Group of Grand Island
 - Fuccillo Hyundai, 1910 Alvin Road
 - Fuccillo Toyota, 1974 Alvin Road
 - Fuccillo Chevrolet, 2000 Alvin Road
- Grand Island Memorial Library, 1715 Bedell Road
- Grand Island Town Hall, 2255 Baseline Road
- The Island Ship Center, 1879 Whitehaven Road
- Marco's Italian Deli, 1441 Ransom Road

“As officers of DECA, our goal is to get our student members extremely involved in our community this year due to this unprecedented time we have been experiencing since March,” the three officers said in a statement.

Kulikowski added: “This is the time when our community needs each other the most. With school on everyone’s mind, we are worried about the families on our Island who may have trouble purchasing school supplies due to layoffs, decreased business, or any other difficult situations that has come about because of the COVID-19 crisis.”

Patterson said it is their goal as DECA officers to ensure “every student in the Grand Island School district has an amazing school year, so why not start by ensuring they have their proper school supplies?”

Lavis encouraged residents to consider shopping for others in need when they are shopping for their child’s back to school supplies.

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Cheryl Chamberlain, the veteran administrator of Grand Island's DECA program, said she will work with the Superintendent and school principals in the district to ensure the back packs of supplies will be distributed to children in need.

“The Rotary Club of Grand Island is thrilled to come together with the DECA officers to expand their efforts for community service,” said Sherry Miller, president of the Rotary Club of Grand Island, who encouraged anyone interested in an organization that regularly supports community service on Grand Island, to contact her at rotaryclub.grandisland.ny@gmail.com”

One of the locations accepting donations is Casey's Cabana, a waterfront eatery on Ferry Road. which was founded and operated three years ago by former GIHS DECA officers Luke Hess and Gabriella Bergstrom, who also was the New York State DECA president in 2020.

ABOUT DECA: DECA is a successful co-curricular club at Grand Island High School. DECA's mission is to prepare emerging leaders and entrepreneurs in marketing, finance, hospitality and management in high schools and colleges around the globe. DECA accomplishes this preparedness by connecting to business, integrating and applying authentic and experiential learning, promoting competition though academics and connecting to the community.

ABOUT ROTARY CLUB OF GRAND ISLAND: Would you like to make a difference in the community, region or internationally? That is the Rotary Club of Grand Island since 1959 whose vision is to promote heartfelt service to its community and the rest of the world. Whether it's financial or 'hands-on' support to programs like the Miracle League's Handicapped Accessible Ball Field, Growing Readers, sponsoring an Interact and EarlyAct service Clubs at Grand Island schools, scholarships for High School students, Salvation Army Food Distribution, Adopt-a-Highway, Undie Sunday collection for community missions these activities and more have been ongoing at Grand Island Rotary. Consider joining us for these rewarding activities. Please contact club President, Sherry Miller @ smiller04it@yahoo.com.

ABOUT GIHS PTSA: The Parent Teacher Assn. (PTA) is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child. At GIHS PTSA, parents, teachers, and students work together to achieve these goals.