



Riverbend Head Start and Family Services seeks local community partners for Coats for Kids campaign

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As part of its ongoing mission to strengthen families in Madison County, Riverbend Head Start & Family Services is reaching out to the local community for support with its Coats for Kids campaign -aimed at ensuring children enrolled in its Head Start and Early Head Start programs has a coat this winter season.

“For years, our Coats for Kids campaign has been supported by Main Street United Methodist Church and St. Paul’s Episcopal Parish and First Clover Leaf Bank. This year, we are seeking other community partners in Madison County to help us provide a warm winter coat to about 200 of the 945 children enrolled in our programs,” said Chuck Parr, president of Riverbend Head Start & Family Services (RHSFS).

So far about one third of the need has been met.

RHSFS gained the support of the Junior League of Greater Alton, St. Paul’s United Methodist Church of Rosewood Heights, and Godfrey Church of the Nazarene. With their generous donations of cash, RHSFS employees went to Macy's this week armed with \$647 to spend on coats. The employees were able to buy 45 coats for preschoolers enrolled in the agency's Head Start program. Upon hearing about the shopping spree, store manager Brad Weiskopf offered an additional \$25 off the purchase of the coats.

“Head Start is the nation's longest running school readiness program for qualifying families. Forty three percent of the program's families live on less than \$10,000 a year making warm winter coats a luxury they cannot afford,” added Parr.

To further its reach in Madison County, RHSFS seeks community partners such as local banks, churches, community service organizations and more, who would like to assist the Agency in collecting coats this winter. Those interested in supporting this cause, may contact Debby Edelman at (618) 463-8913. Collection boxes for new or gently used coats and marketing assistance will be provided so the participating partner need only provide a location for collections.

Since 1916 RHSFS has provided unduplicated child development services to families in Madison County. Through its Head Start and Early Head Start programs the agency enables children and families to develop positive skills to meet life's challenges by promoting education.

For the young child Riverbend Head Start & Family Services offer early childhood education, as well as health and nutrition services. For families and individuals they offer mental health counseling, social services, family literacy and various individual strengthening and family support services. For more information about Riverbend Head Start & Family Services and its program, please visit www.riverbendfamilies.org or call (618) 463-5946.