

Hillmer, other nurses help those in need throughout Edwardsville School District

by Michael Robinson, Contributor
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EDWARDSVILLE - “Hardships can happen to any of us at any time,” says Sandra Hillmer.

As the school nurse at Columbus Elementary in Edwardsville, Hillmer understands the importance of helping others during trying times all too well.

During each holiday, Hillmer and 14 other school nurses in the Edwardsville district work with their schools to “identify families in need,” she says.

“We then match those needs with community organizations, agencies, individuals, and student groups who want to provide assistance,” Hillmer continues.

“Our main objective is to help as many families as possible obtain the things they need the most.”

Many of the people who benefit from this band of nurses’ efforts are presented with the things they need most during the holidays.

“In 2014, we helped more than 71 families during the Thanksgiving season and 164 families (more than 500 children) during the Christmas season,” says Hillmer.

However, Hillmer personally believes that assisting people in need should extend beyond the realm of the holidays.

“With the economy the way it is, we have more and more people that need assistance throughout the entire year. We do whatever we can to accommodate the people who are faced with unfortunate circumstances, regardless of the season.

“We use all of our resources, organize, and provide a wide variety of collections to help meet the needs of these families,” she says.

Their efforts have provided families with things such as clothing, books, cleaning supplies, canned food items, and toys. Hillmer pays a lot of credit to the community as a whole.

“We are lucky enough to have a very giving community as our main support system,” she says. “The donations we receive allow us to offer an abundance of support to disadvantaged families.”

Hillmer also pays homage to the 14 other nurses in the district.

“My role is really about coordinating all of the assistance with the district,” she says. “The other nurses are really the heart of the program. They do a lot of hard work.”

The Columbus nurse and her colleagues are committed to helping these families. The hard work they put in is done purely out of the kindness of their hearts.

“Helping others is not something we feel should be done for monetary gain,” she says. “Just the rewarding feeling that you get by helping someone in a time of need is payment enough.”

Hillmer also believes that programs like the one she coordinates can be used as a tool for guiding the youth in a similar path.

“It is important to give back because it teaches the next generation that helping out your fellow man is OK,” she says. “This, we feel, will have a positive effect on us as a society, ultimately making us better people.”