

Coalition donates supply kits

by Linda Ebbing

HAMILTON — Thousands of Butler County students started the new school year prepared for what lies ahead with supplies provided by the Butler County School Supply Coalition.

The coalition — established seven years ago — donated kits to every school district in the county except Talawanda. The Talawanda community raised enough money to purchase supplies for their students.

The coalition is sponsored by the Board of Butler County Commissioners, the Butler County Department of Job and Family Services, the Princeton Pike Church of God, Supports to Encourage Low Income Families, the Butler County United Way, the United Way of Oxford, Ohio and Vicinity and The Family Resource Center in Oxford.

Because of a reduction in state funding, “our initial thoughts were that we weren’t going to be able to participate,” said Jerome Kerns, assistant director of Job and Family Services.

The good news, he said, is “we were able to fund some of the project.” The better news is that by ordering in bulk versus prepackaged, the group saved 12 percent and purchased the equivalent of 4,114 kits.

“The district truly appreciates the continued support that the Butler County School Supply Coalition provides for our students,” said Joni Copas, spokeswoman for the Hamilton City School District. “There is a very big need for the necessary items some students need to begin their new school year.”

Service organizations, the Oxford Community Foundation, residents, the Miami University Partnership Office and Wal-Mart provided enough funding to purchase 1,000 supply kits for the Talawanda School district, which has 910 students on free and reduced lunches.

When a committee was formed to sponsor the community school supply initiative, “we decided we really wanted all of the students in the Talawanda School District on free and reduced lunch to receive free school supplies,” said Maureen Kranbuhl, executive director of the United Way of Oxford and vicinity. “We believe that it is absolutely essential that every student start the school year with the supplies they need.”

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