

Washington Elementary giving back big time

By Tom Ganser
CORRESPONDENT

The students of Washington Elementary School are getting into the holiday season in a big way through a special school project, "Giving Thanks by Giving Back."

Their goal is to collect 10,000 clothing items by Nov. 22 for Whitewater's Community Clothes Closet in a project organized by Washington's "Parents and Teachers Together" (PATT).

Katy Katzman, president of PATT, said, "If we reach that goal, PATT is going to award each classroom \$30 to use as they see fit during the upcoming holiday season in hopes that they will 'Pay It Forward,' possibly providing a Thanksgiving Dinner to a family, buying some toys for a family in need during the holiday season, etc."



Washington Elementary School students stand behind the school's initial collection for Giving Thanks by Giving Back, above from the left: Crystal Verduzko, Reece Hammond, Mariana Aranda, Sydney

Pinkowski, Skylar Staebler, Aaron Katzman, Reese Brantmeier, Evelyn Troxel, Ella Houwers and Reid Gunnick. The school set a goal of collecting 10,000 lbs. of clothes by Nov. 22.

Katzman also said PATT hoped that deciding how to spend the \$30 "will generate some good conversation about 'giving back.'"

"The students get really excited and motivated by

activities," Katzman said. "And they see the needs in our own school, in our own backyard. We hope that their ideas and thoughts about ordinary acts of philanthropy continue on into adulthood."

As of Nov. 7, 2,080 clothing items had been collected. Members of the Whitewater community are invited to join the effort and donate clothing items to "Giving Thanks by Giving Back" by

bringing them to Washington Elementary School between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. through Nov. 22. Winter clothes — coats, hats, scarves, mittens, gloves and boots — are high on the priority list.

TIF districts reviewed by city's CDA

By Dave Fidlín
CORRESPONDENT

Expressing optimism with perceived economic improvements, members of the Whitewater CDA recently discussed a number of the areas of the city designated as tax incremental financing (TIF) districts.

Officials briefly went over TIF districts 5 to 8 during a meeting Oct. 23. TIFs 5 and 7 are designated for mixed-use, a term denoting a blend of commercial and residential uses. TIFs 6 and 8, meanwhile, are earmarked for industrial use.

"We're kind of getting out of the doldrums of this economy," said CDA Chair Jeff Knight, expressing optimism of future development within the city.

During their whirlwind review of the TIF districts, CDA members received a report of their proposed assessed values. TIF 5 is valued at \$3.5 million, TIF 6 at \$2.7 million, TIF 7 at \$356,500 and TIF 8 at \$355,000.

"They're very much

pie-in-the-sky numbers," CDA Coordinator Patrick Cannon said.

Moving forward, CDA officials plan to review some of the more specific numbers associated with each of the TIF districts, including development costs and improvements to infrastructure, including street construction, right-of-way acquisition and other amenities.

Additionally, a thorough analysis of land acquisition is planned, as is the cost of relocating any existing buildings within the TIF districts and possible developer incentives.

"From my perspective, there are a couple of things I think we should be looking at," Knight said.

Consultation with an engineer is essential, Knight said, because the professional's insight will assist in setting priorities. "We have to prioritize where we're going to go first and second and third," Knight said.

One of the developments on the CDA's wish list is some type of medical facility.

Historical Society welcomes first permanent exhibit

The Whitewater Historical Society will say "goodbye" to its first temporary exhibit at the newly renovated depot museum and say "hello" to the beginnings of the first permanent Whitewater history exhibit — the pre-1836 natural and cultural ecology of Whitewater next week.

The event, slated for 7 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 20, is open to the public and will include a presentation and free reception at the depot museum on Whitewater Street.

The society's first tem-

porary exhibit, "Good Times Coming, Whitewater and the Railroad," coincided with the reopening of the renovated historic Whitewater Passenger Depot, now used as a local history museum. This exhibit took a look at how the railroad first came to Whitewater and how the depot fit into the history of rail transportation in the city. The exhibit will be taken down in December and January and will be replaced with a new exhibit showcasing many of the museum's household-related artifacts that will open in

April of 2014.

The society has been working on planning the first permanent Whitewater history exhibit in the museum's main gallery, the old passenger depot waiting room. Renae Prell-Mitchell Ph.D., a geographer and cultural ecologist, is doing the research and planning and will give a presentation on how the new exhibit which will show how both Native peoples and pioneer settlers adapted and interacted with the natural environment in the area.

Prell-Mitchell said community members, particularly artists, carpenters and others who may be able to assist in installing the exhibit, are encouraged to attend the Nov. 20 event.

Once the pre-1836 cultural history of Whitewater exhibit is installed, the society will begin to develop other permanent history exhibits, including the pioneer era, Whitewater and the Civil War, and Whitewater stories from the later 19th century and the early 20th century.

•Partnership

(Continued from front page)

with the caveat officials within the organization raise \$40,000 — either through cash or in-kind donations — to enhance the downtown business community.

Dave Saalsaa, who serves on Downtown Whitewater's board of directors, came before the Common Council last week and discussed the organization's past, present and future.

In 2013, Saalsaa said

Downtown Whitewater went through a number of pivotal changes, including new leadership on the board of directors. With the changes, he said, comes a renewed vision for the downtown community.

"We continue to do our work, and we've created an environment that allows the private sector to do its best work," Saalsaa said.

More recently, Downtown

Whitewater has been actively involved in a façade grant program, and Saalsaa characterized it as a highly successful, popular initiative within the downtown business community. Grant dollars have currently been fully expended.

Saalsaa said the downtown business community has responded overwhelmingly positive to Downtown Whitewater's mission statement. Ninety percent of the city's downtown merchants have donated some form of resource — including talent, products, services and financial contributions — toward the organization and its programs.

Moving forward, Saalsaa said Downtown Whitewater is hoping to replenish funds within the façade grant program so business owners can continue sprucing up the exteriors of their buildings.

Saalsaa said Downtown Whitewater's board also would like to enhance its existing relationship with the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

"We have provided a very good environment for entrepreneurs," Saalsaa said.

"We're hoping to see more UW-Whitewater graduates stay in the community and grow their businesses."

During the council meeting, board member Kristine Zaballos briefly outlined some of Downtown Whitewater's objectives and plans for the upcoming year.

The organization's summertime Pig in the Park event has been growing, and Zaballos said efforts are underway to further enhance its popularity. She said a \$17,000 grant is being sought to apply toward additional advertising and promotions.

Also, the organization has helped spearhead an effort to bring back renowned animal expert and TV personality Jack Hanna. He paid a visit to Whitewater in 2010 and will part of an event at UWW in the upcoming year.

Zaballos said Downtown Whitewater also would like to strengthen its relationship with UWW by offering internships.

During the discussion, several council members inquired about a proposed Business Improvement District (BID) within the downtown community. BIDs have been created in a number of municipalities in an effort to help fund the vitality of a specific business community.

"It's really a grassroots idea," City Manager Cameron Clapper said in response. "Neither the city nor Downtown Whitewater is looking to make this happen. We have not been pushing the idea, and we'll see if it happens organically."

Clapper said the city has been acting merely as a conduit of information as business owners ask about the specifics of BIDs.

•K9 officer

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volumes that they don't want drugs on the campus either," Otterbacher said.

Once the K9 is purchased, Otterbacher said the animal will be assigned to work with an officer who will be fully responsible for the animal's care.

"The K9 will be on patrol every time the officer is on duty," Otterbacher said. "The officer will have a take-home car. The dog will live with family members when it's not working, so there will be that dual purpose."

Several commissioners asked whether the K9 would be loaned to other nearby agencies. In response, Otterbacher said it was unlikely, but not out of the question. Most county sheriff's departments have a trained K9 on duty that can be used to assist municipalities.

While an exact timetable has not been set for the purchase and introduction of the K9 into the Whitewater Police Department, Otterbacher said the intent is to have the dog on duty at some point in 2014.

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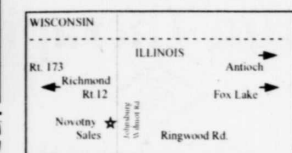
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