

Thousands of school supplies delivered

- Junior Service League members take carloads of much-needed items to local schools.

 By Kristina Wilder

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Stocking the shelves

Junior Service League members have just finished purchasing and sorting 4,326 glue sticks, 2,275 packs of pencils, 4,551 folders, more than 700 binders and 300 book bags.

And now, they are about to start all over again. The school supplies are all part of the JSL's League 4 Learning program, funded by its annual poinsettia sale and ticket sales for the garden tour and follies.

League members spent about \$14,000 this year purchasing school supplies that they divided up and delivered to schools in Rome and Floyd County.

"We base the amount of supplies each school gets on how many children receive free and reduced lunches," explained Lulie Chin, outgoing chair of the League 4 Learning and vice president of JSL.

The league does all of its shopping a year in advance and stores the supplies at a space provided for free by Garden Lakes Realty, so 100 percent of the money they raise can be used for the supplies, Chin said.

"We shop early and find the best deals we can," she said. "We also try to take into account what each school tells us they need."

Along with the thousands of binders, glue sticks, pencils and backpacks, the group also purchases notebooks, notebook paper, colored pencils, crayons, pencil boxes and pouches, composition books, rulers and scissors.

"Anything a student might need," Chin said. "This is the most fun I have all year. I love taking the supplies to the school and maybe meeting some parents and children. There is a lot of need in our area."

Once delivered, the supplies are stored in closets at the school, so if a student needs something there is no worry, their teacher goes to the closet and gets it for them.

"The league called us at the end of last year to ask us for suggestions," said Tonya Wood, principal at North Heights Elementary. "We tell them what our students usually end up needing and they make sure we get it."

Korra Wayne, a first grade teacher at North Heights, said even the smallest items can be a huge help.

"Glue sticks, we always run out of those," Wayne said. "These supplies help when a child loses something or when a backpack wears out or maybe when a new child comes to the school and doesn't have what they need."

Wayne said the supply closet filled with items from the JSL is a "lifesaver."

"If we didn't have their help, it would be coming out of pocket," she said. "It is hard for parents, especially after they bring us four bags of supplies at the beginning of the year. Having to ask again and again is hard. To be able to walk to the closet and find a notebook or a pencil case for a child who needs it is very nice."

JSL member Ginger Shelly said the annual delivery is a day she especially enjoys.

"As a police officer, this is a chance for me to give back to my community," she said. "I run into a lot of people in need on the job."

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Read this story online for a link to the Junior Service League website.



Korra Wayne, first grade teacher at North Heights Elementary, unpacks items donated to the school by the Junior Service League.



Photos by Kristina Wilder, Rome News-Tribune
Victor Chin (left) helps his mom Lulie Chin pack her car full of school supplies. Chin is a member of the Junior Service League and the outgoing League 4 Learning chair.



David Sparkman (left), custodian at Elm Street, helps the school secretary Julie Clonts pack the supply closet after the Junior Service League delivers school supplies to the school.



 Kristina Wilder/Rome News-Tribune

Lauren Sipp checks her car for space as she packs it to deliver school supplies to schools Monday morning. Junior Service League members were out early Monday to pick up supplies and deliver them to local schools.



 Kristina Wilder/Rome News-Tribune

Jennifer Gleason packs her car with several pencil boxes and other school supplies. Gleason is the incoming League 4 Learning Chair and is already beginning to order supplies for next school year.