



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS CONTINUE LIFE SKILL LESSONS DURING REMOTE LEARNING

Home Depot and Lowe's donate supplies needed for instruction.

Holland, MI – With school buildings closed for the remainder of the school year, students ages 18-26 with special needs in the Young Adults Services (YAS) program continue to learn work and life skills at home that will allow them to enter adult life as independently as possible, with help from dedicated instructors thinking outside the box.

Thirty students in the YAS program, a service of Ottawa Area Intermediate School District, are completing woodworking projects at home that continue to build skills typically learned in the classroom. While working on the projects, students are following verbal and written directions, learning to use tools, and interacting with their teacher and the community. The lasting benefit of these skills including growing verbal and written skills, a sense of independence, building fine and gross motor skills, and interacting with the public through sales of their products.

Student-built pieces include inspirational signs and birdhouse kits created by the instructors and birdfeeder kits donated by Home Depot and Lowe's, both of which also donated building tools and supplies to help complete the kits. Instructors currently have enough inventory to give each student one project a week until the end of the school year.

Peter Johnson, Ed.D., Director of Young Adult Services for OAISD, said he was excited about the learning opportunities instructors approached him about that would enhance the YAS students' learning from home.

"Building these kits keeps students engaged in learning and gives them a sense of independence, self-sufficiency and accomplishment when they finish a project," Johnson said. "Students can then sell the completed project which works on communication skills and managing money. All skills students will need when they enter adult life independently."

Sale proceeds are used to offset program costs.

Johnson added that remote learning has also helped students learn how to navigate a computer to watch the project "how-to" videos, which is another skill they will use throughout their life.

"I'm so proud of our YAS instructors and how they found ways to take advantage of the new learning frontier brought by the COVID-19 pandemic," Johnson said.

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Young Adult Services

Serving students and the community for thirty years, the Young Adult Services program is for students ages 18 to 26 receiving special education services through Ottawa Area ISD. Students participate in activities inside and outside the classroom focusing on life skills, job skills, personal care, and functional academics allowing them to reach maximum independence. Students also have the opportunity to acquire these skills through short-term placements at community businesses and organizations.

www.oaisd.org/yas

Ottawa Area Intermediate School District

Ottawa Area Intermediate School District works collaboratively with schools and communities to meet the educational needs of students of all ages in the Ottawa area. By pooling resources and providing services regionally, Ottawa Area ISD provides important programs and services to local K-12 school districts, charter, parochial and private schools and adults in the most cost-effective ways possible. To learn more about Ottawa Area ISD visit www.oaisd.org

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