

Community gets look at Hope Resource Center

A little boy who didn't want to go to school because he only had a piece of rope to hold up his pants is just one of the stories heard in the six months since centers opened at local school sites to help families in need.

An open house was held April 16 at one of the five Hope Resource Centers offered by the Chino Valley Unified School District.

The event featured a tour of the Hope Resource Center located on the campus of the district's Alternative Education Center in Chino Hills. It also included information booths on healthy living and recreation programs offered by the cities of Chino and Chino Hills, and anti-smoking programs offered by the school district.

The Hope Resource Centers are the result of efforts by Superintendent Wayne Joseph to help families in need in the school district after realizing that many academic problems stem from issues children have at home. In February 2014, he established a Hope Committee of local community leaders to address those issues, and in November of that year, the school district opened the five centers with \$250,000 it had set aside for the project.

During the open house, Chino Valley school board members Andrew Cruz and James Na said the superintendent's idea to help families in need began long ago with his elders.

"My mother, father, and grandmother always tried to emphasize the feeling that it doesn't matter how rich or poor you are, ultimately it's about how you treat other people," Superintendent Joseph said. "(The centers) say something about this community. It's such a vibrant community; that embraces each other."

Each center is manned by a bilingual case manager who helps provide families with food, clothing, parent education, tutoring information, housing information, and counseling, often through referrals to other agencies. The school district contracts with the City of Chino to provide the case managers.

Clothing comes from the district's CARE Closet, operated from a room on the Chino Valley Adult School campus in Chino. Families are invited to visit the Closet and select items for their children.

The Hope Resource Centers are located at the Chino Valley Adult School campus, 12970 Third St., Chino; Alternative Education Center, 15650 Pipeline Ave., Chino Hills; Dickson Elementary School, 3930 Pamela Drive, Chino, room 16; Walnut Avenue Elementary School, 5550 Walnut Ave., Chino, room 20; and Dickey Elementary School, 2840 Parco Ave., Ontario, room 103.

Chino Valley Unified School District families may visit any of the resource centers.

Center hours are 8 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday. Afternoon appointments are available by calling the Family Resource Center's main number at (909) 628-1201, ext. 8960.

"It's impressive how quickly this came about," Chino Hills City Councilman Peter Rogers said at the open house. "Normally, bureaucracy holds things up." He said the open house will generate interest in the centers, as word gets around the community.

Chino Hills Mayor Cynthia Moran encouraged those attending the event to donate clothing to the CARE Closet. The number one need at the closet is jeans and shoes for children in grades first through sixth, said Liz Lara, program manager for the centers.

“We have found, the most practical way to help our families is with gift cards,” Ms. Lara said.

The district is currently working through the Chino Community Center Corporation to get non-profit status for the Hope Resource Centers so donations will be tax-deductible.

For information about the centers, to donate clothing and gift cards, or to volunteer at the CARE Closet, call (909) 628-1201, ext. 8960.