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### **Donation from FDL Noon Optimists completely replaces Back to School supplies lost in flood**

(Fond du Lac, WI)—The Fond du Lac Noon Club chapter of Optimist International again lived up to their name and their community mission by ensuring local children had school supplies after original items were ruined in the March 2019 flood. The service organization donated \$5,000 to replace damaged items and ensure the annual distribution of school supplies could proceed as scheduled.

“The focus of Optimist International and all local groups is to help children develop to their full potential,” said Noon Optimist President Joe Skelton, CEO of Nemesis Metal. “Optimist Marty Schibbelhut heard about the need to replace these school supplies for local kids, and our group decided to donate all tips earned from running the annual Optimists food booth at the Fond du Lac County Fair. We then boosted that amount with an additional donation from our group to meet the \$5000 we knew was needed to fully replace the lost supplies.”

As General Manager of Mountain Dog/Martini Media, Schibbelhut was deep in covering news of the mid-March flood and brought word of the damaged school supplies to the service group in late spring. Ice jams and heavy rain caused the east branch of the Fond du Lac River to breach its banks March 14, leading to flooding of homes, businesses, and streets that was especially hard on central and downtown Fond du Lac. The Fond du Lac Boys and Girls Club at 76 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> St. was among the flooded buildings, and thousands of supplies being stored for future use by students were ruined by floodwater.

Schibbelhut contacted Gloria Schmidt in the school district’s administrative center to learn more about what the program needed. In a word: Everything.

“Backpacks, pencils, paper—everything a kid could need for the first day of school,” Schibbelhut recalled. “Those supplies had been ruined. The Back to School FDL program serves low-income kids in our community...around 900 each year in grades K through 12, who might not otherwise have the supplies they need for learning. As Optimists, we are dedicated to all children and to our community: it was clear we needed to help these Fond du Lac students have a brighter future by starting this school year with the supplies they need.”

Back to School FDL is a community collaboration of local churches, businesses, organizations, and the Fond du Lac Public School District. Supplies are provided to students who meet income eligibility requirements and register with The Salvation Army. Donations are accepted, and volunteers staff the distribution event. For more information, visit <https://backtoschoolfdl.org/>.

Fond du Lac Noon Optimists is chapter of Optimist International, and a local volunteer organization made up of dedicated community members who work each day to make the future brighter by bringing out the best in children, in their communities, and in themselves. For more information, go to <https://www.fldnoonoptimist.org/>. ###