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School store teaches life skills

Gabrielle Cockerham and Rachael Vonada
 • Contributing Writers

In a tiny corner of Hayes, big things are happening. The new school store, the Pacer Paddock, is not only providing students with pens and notebooks, but life skills the Transitions students will need after high school.

"We've been wanting to start a school store for years," said Jen McCoy, a Hayes Transition teacher. The idea of the school store is to offer cheaper prices than a grocery or office supply store and to give work experience for the students.

The Pacer Paddock is located on a cart, in the art hallway, next to the guidance office. It is open most periods and after school until 2:45, and offers a wide array of merchandise, from dry erase boards and poster board, to ear buds and vintage Pacer wear.

The store started off as the brainchild of the Transitions teachers, who wanted a school store to help teach their students retail job skills. With an initial investment from the school to buy merchandise, the Pacer Paddock was born.

"We teach functional life skills; cooking, household skills, job skills, and knowing your rights," said Emily Martin, one of the educators in the money, make change, take inventory, interact with customers, write up balance sheets, take inventory, and pick items to sell.

Like many stands, the Paddock had a startup fund to purchase items to sell. All the money spent at the school store is put back into the store for buying more supplies. This means that the more funds the Paddock earns, the more they have to spend and the better the products they can sell.

"I like to make change and meet people," said Betty Richards, a student in the program. She and her classmates plan to use the skills they learn in their post high school lives.

Ric Stranges, the principal at Hayes High School, has supported the store from the beginning. "Any time [students] can learn a life skill by sitting down and actually doing it, I can see they are gaining confidence," Stranges said. He hopes to move the store into its own room

spend a quarter, it gives [the student workers] the chance to interact with you," he said. "Even if you don't buy anything, go down and window shop, talk to the kids, make them feel this is important to our school."

Stranges also emphasized that it is the community centered causes, like the Pacer Pantry and the Pacer Paddock, generated by the students and faculty that really make Delaware a special place.

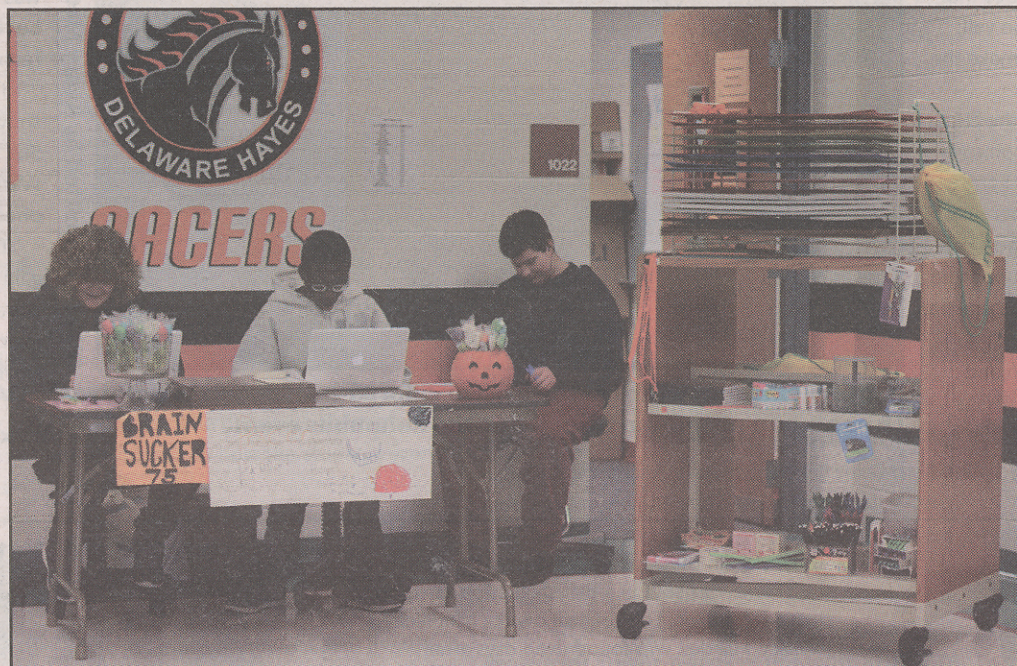


Photo by Bushra Ghafoor

The store was created by the Transitions program in an effort to both improve their students' skill sets and to provide a service to the student body.

and expand the inventory to include donated merchandise and more Pacer swag.

Stranges encourages students to be good customers at the store. He describes being a good customer as someone who helps out the students who work in the store. "Even if you

"I don't think there is anything better than us helping each other, because this is our school and we make it what we want to make it, a caring, connected, and relational place," Stranges said. "That is where I want to be." ❖

Food pantry helps students in need

Bryan MacDonald and Thomas Moeger • Contributing Writers

This year, Hayes has formed many new clubs and programs to help the students of the school. "Part of our responsibility is try to take care of each other," said principal Ric Stranges. One of the programs leading the charge to make a difference is the Pacer Pantry.

The Pacer Pantry was formed to help students and families who need food due to financial issues. Students in need can come and pick up a couple of items of food to take home to their families. The students who receive help remain anonymous so that the families of the students don't receive any negative attention from others.

"Anyone can fill out a log [online], and it's completely anonymous."

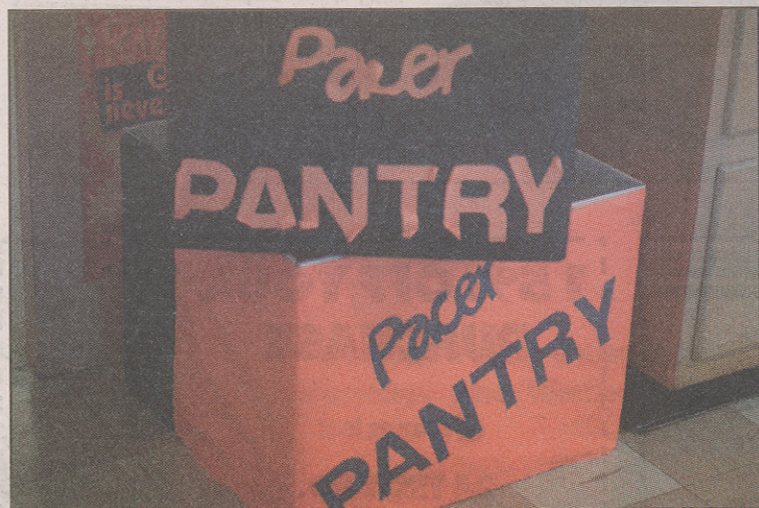


Photo by Monique Martinez

Boxes sit in room 6003, waiting for students to drop off their donations. The Pacer Pantry was created as a support system for students in need who don't have enough food at home.

said Jen McCoy, the teacher responsible for checking requests.

Students can select specific foods that they need in the log. McCoy monitors a spreadsheet where the orders are sent and then reports the requests to the students that run the Pantry so that they can find the food.

A confirmation is then sent to the requester and the person can go to the Pacer Pantry room to pick up the food.

The pantry is run by the students and teachers of Pacer Plus and Transitions programs. Pacer Plus offers an alternative way for students to earn credits toward graduation, and Transitions teaches life skills to students who may not learn them in another way.

The pantry is located in the Pacer Plus room in the basement.

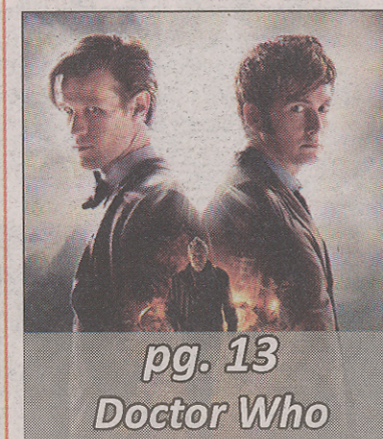
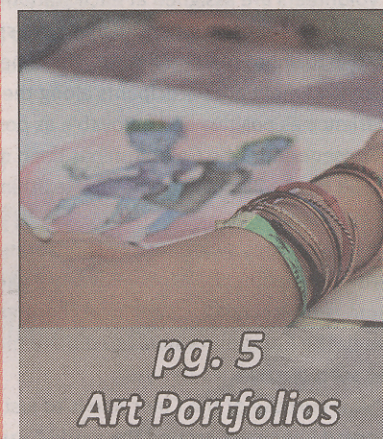
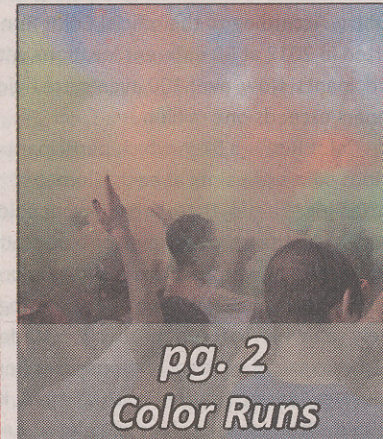
To donate to the pantry, students can drop off food in the main office or in the commons during lunch periods. The Pantry accepts many types of food but prefers nonperishable items such as canned food and anything else that won't go bad.

Every day a student from the Transitions program goes to the cafeteria to collect unused food for the pantry.

Currently, the principal and the people who run the pantry are trying to find a way to still distribute food over the weekend and breaks. An idea floating around is the possibility of a delivery system to the homes of students and their families.

Both the Pantry and its sister program the Pacer Paddock have plans of becoming permanent fixtures at Hayes, but they are still trying to raise awareness. To fix this issue, the teachers and students in charge hope to set up social media plans. Posters advertising the Paddock's Twitter page can be seen around the school.

Once more students become aware of the Pantry, Stranges thinks it will grow into a successful program. "I'm impressed by the spirit the students have to help the school," he said. ❖



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