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FEATURED

## Milestone of 'Kindness': Health system announces yearlong campaign to promote wellness, donates to schools

By David Hurst  
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Emily Korn, Director of Marketing & Communications at Conemaugh Health System announces on Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019, the launching of 130 acts of kindness that employees will complete throughout the year.

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The Conemaugh Health System will mark its 130th anniversary by delivering 130 "acts of kindness" to the three-county area its facilities serve.

Officials with the health system – whose roots date back to the formation of Conemaugh Valley Memorial Hospital in the wake of the 1889 Johnstown flood – announced the move Thursday inside their Memorial Medical Center campus, while making donations to 35 school districts across Blair, Cambria and Somerset counties.

"When we started talking about our anniversary ... we started asking, how can we honor (our employees) while living up to our promise to make communities healthier," Director of Marketing Communications Emily Korn said.

Hospital officials delivered on their first two acts this week.

The first was the completion of a fundraising campaign by the health system's 3,450 employees that delivered \$70,000 the United Way of the Laurel Highlands.

The other was announced Thursday in front of officials from a dozen schools spanning from Glendale to Rockwood Area, with Conemaugh Health System leaders making \$250 donations to 35 schools from the communities they serve, while giving their students a year's worth of access to a suite of interactive health and fitness programs.

"You have the pulse on your districts," Korns told area educators Thursday, urging each to use the donations toward wellness efforts that fit their schools' needs.

Divine Mercy Dean of Students Matt Ribblett welcomed the donation.

He noted the Catholic school has recently deployed the Botvin Life Skills program – a well-known program created to encourage drug and alcohol prevention through healthier lifestyles. And it's possible that funding could be directed there, Ribblett added.

"We've got a lot of things going on right now – but funding is always one of the major things we have to worry about," he said.

Until now, the package of wellness programs Conemaugh is offering to students were only available to hospital staff as an employee benefit.

That list includes 10,000 Steps, a pedometer-reliant program designed to promote more activity, Biggest Loser – a team-based motivational weight loss challenge – and 10 other programs.

Conemaugh officials offered school leaders a quick seminar Thursday to educate them about the programs.

In the year ahead, Korns indicated Conemaugh officials and staff will be partnering with other groups to make a difference in the community as part of their 130th anniversary.

Another celebration Saturday – dubbed Conemaugh Community Day – will open up the doors of the Heritage Discovery Center in Johnstown's Cambria City to the public. From 10 am to 5 p.m., area residents will be able to access the interactive center, including its children's museum. Crafts will be available, while Conemaugh will celebrate a ribbon-cutting of its new Career Corner exhibit.

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