All food items are donated. No money comes from the Sheriff's Office budget. Food Lion helps out by giving them price breaks on what they buy.

The culinary program at Bedford County Public Schools helps. It's right across Falling Creek Road from the Sheriff's Office, has a lot of freezer space and provides deputies with space for turkey's and frozen pies until they are ready to deliver them.

Helping people is important for Betty Easter, one of the citizen's police academy alumni. Easter worked for a missions organization that helped the poorest of the poor in Eastern Europe. Before retiring, she worked to help people in Macedonia, who were malnourished.

She retired and returned to Bedford County, but helping hungry people is something she can't let go. Easter works as a volunteer for Society of St. Andrew, a home-grown program that got quite large over the years. A huge program of theirs is the gleaning program which works with farmers to salvage produce that is fine, but is not marketable. For Easter, volunteering with the Sheriff's Office is the sort of thing that she is all about ¬ — helping provide a good meal for people who would not have had much for Thanksgiving.

The Monday morning, before Thanksgiving, Sheriff's Office vehicles and other vehicles gathered at the Sheriff's Office and loaded up the vehicles. Then, with volunteers and sheriff's deputies on board, the got the names and addresses where they were going to deliver the food and headed out.

Last Thursday, 31 local families had a good family meal.

News

Educational Foundation helps teachers

By John Barnhart Staff Writer

Dec 4, 2024



Educational Foundation supporters talk during the get-together.

On a cold, blustery evening, the Bedford Area Educational Foundation said “Thank you” to supporters who helped make the foundation’s work possible. Thanks to donations, the Foundation was able to make $7,687 in grants to teachers and counselors in Bedford County. The Foundation’s purpose is to provide money beyond the school budget to provide support for specific projects. Money comes from business partners and individual donations.

According to Jay White, executive director of the foundation, a major effort has been a partnership with other organizations to provide three levels of mental health support — kindergarten through fifth grade, sixth through eighth grade and ninth trough 12th grade. The goal is to provide healthy alternatives to cell phone use as a coping strategy. White said this in support of the superintendent of schools policy to ban cell phones from student use during school time.

White said that cell phones can not only be a distraction to students, but cell phones could become an electronic pit for these vulnerable young people. This mental health initiative could provide a healthy alternative. The initiative can look at strategies that can redirect students to more healthy sources.

White said studies have shown that the rise in cell phone use has shown a rise in negative behavior as a result of this digital influence.

He said they have joined with the Stroobants Foundation, the Greater Lynchburg Community Foundation and the Bedford Community Health Foundation to provide $27,000 for this effort.

Foundation grants have funded the Kimochis program for students. This is a program for kindergarten through fifth grade. It helps them help students to express emotions. White said that young children often don't have the words to express their feelings.

A Foundation grant is funding the backpack program in Big Island Elementary School. Every Friday, the program will send enough food for the weekend home with 34 students. The food meets federal nutrition guidelines.

This is an educational initiative because these children depend on school meal programs to eat.

"If they don't go to school, they don't eat," said White.

This way, they will eat when they are home on the weekend.

News

BCPS names finalist for Teacher of the Year

Dec 4, 2024



Office

Kristine Childress



Office

Sharon Blake



Office

Niki White

Bedford County Public Schools (BCPS) has named the three finalists for Teacher of Year. Sharon Blake of Staunton River Middle School, Niki White of Jefferson Forest High School, and Kristine Childress of Staunton River High School will vie for the honor of representing the school district at the statewide competition.

Sharon Blake is in her 17th year of teaching in Bedford County. She currently teaches 8th grade English/Language Arts and Journalism at Staunton River Middle School. She is celebrating her 17th year of inspiring students! As a dedicated English teacher (Department Chair), volleyball coach, mentor, and much more, she brings an infectious passion for teaching that truly lights up our school community. She has hosted both practicum and student teachers from various universities. She established and developed the WSRMS Talon News and is the Yearbook advisor. She is also the "guardian" of Titus the Eagle. Sharon has served as the head Varsity Volleyball Coach at SRHS for the past 8 years. Whether in the classroom or on the volleyball court, she approaches every teachable moment with a smile, a sense of humor, and an incredibly positive attitude.

For 14 years, Niki White has made a profound impact on the Jefferson Forest High School community through her passion for the arts and her extensive Broadway experience. She inspires students in the Cavalier Theatre Department, helping them embrace their talents and the collaborative spirit of performance. Niki's supportive approach connects with students of all ages, encouraging them to shine on and off the stage. Beyond theater, she teaches dance and has chaired the Related Arts department, fostering a vibrant Fine Arts community at JFHS.