

GHS grad takes step to provide new shoes for needy kids

Finger Lakes Times | Posted: Sunday, February 15, 2015 2:00 pm

GENEVA — Thanks in part to one Geneva alumnus, over 100 children in the district will now have brand-new sneakers.

Adam Murphy, who graduated from Geneva High School in 2009, now lives in Pennsylvania and works for FOCUS North America, an Orthodox Christian fellowship dedicated to serving homeless and working poor throughout the nation. However rewarding his work on a national scale is, there was one location that weighed particularly heavily on Murphy's mind: Geneva.

While in Geneva, Murphy was an active volunteer, having served with the Festival of Nations, and his parents still live and work in the city. Consequently, he knows all too well the challenges many of Geneva's economically disadvantaged face.

"I asked my mom what could be done in Geneva because I've always wanted to give back to the community," he said.

Murphy's mother, Suzanne Murphy, is a music teacher in the district. His father, the Rev. Gregory Murphy, is pastor of St. Michael's Orthodox Church in Geneva.

"I know that Geneva oftentimes gets overlooked in terms of projects that go on," Adam Murphy said, noting larger cities tend to receive more philanthropic aid.

One program at FOCUS seemed perfectly suited to Geneva. It was Operation: Lace Up. This FOCUS program, through a partnership with Toms Shoes, provides footwear to children in need throughout the nation.

Murphy proposed the project to his employer and was able to secure approximately 120 pairs of shoes for Geneva, which are slated to be divided between Head Start and West Street School based on available shoe sizes.

"The sneakers that were provided for Head Start will serve about 25 percent of our families," said Head



New shoes

Geneva Head Start nurse Kristine Echols helps children try on new sneakers.

Start nurse Kristine Echols, who is in charge of distribution. “Especially this time of year, it really helps that our families won’t have to buy new shoes. I think it’s a wonderful thing to be able to partner with FOCUS.”

“We are so grateful to Adam and to FOCUS North America,” Geneva school Superintendent Trina Newton said. “Many children in Geneva face huge economic hurdles. As educators, this immediately makes us worry about the impact on their academics. But more than that, it makes us worry about their daily lives. Shoes are a basic need and Adam’s dedication means many of our children now have one less basic need going unmet.”