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Grand Island Schools: Tech delivered to grade 2 students



BY MICHAEL J. BILLONI
Contributor

There have been many local heroes of essential workers on the front lines during this COVID-19 pandemic, such as doctors, nurses, first responders, firefighters, police officers, postal workers, restaurant workers and delivery men and women. High on the list, though, must be the schoolteachers and administrators who remain at school every day providing distance learning and guidance to students while working with fellow teachers on preparing creative, interesting lessons for their students.

That has truly been the case in the Grand Island School District, led by Superintendent Dr. Brian Graham, Ed.D., and followed through by each of the building principals and teachers as they have successfully been able to keep students informed and engaged while not knowing what the future holds for the present school year.

This past Monday morning, the final pieces of technology were delivered to the second-grade students from the William Kae-



gebein Elementary School by 12 teachers wearing face masks (some coverings made by district employees). Huth Road Elementary School delivered its iPads to the second-graders last Friday.

The iPads, keyboards and chargers had been cleaned and inventoried by the district's technology department. Kaegebein School Principal Mary Haggerty said that, in order to make the iPads distribution occur, the district purchased chargers that could be used at home. Additional changes

to software and filters was also required to facilitate the use of the devices by students at home.

"Our district's technology department has been working in overdrive to make the delivery and use of technology for learning possible," Haggerty said on a beautiful April morning as she watched her teachers place the iPads in bags along with additional materials for math and reading. The bags were labeled for each student, sorted by bus route and two teachers – along with the boxes, bus drivers, masks, gloves and snacks – traveled through the Kaegebein area delivering the bundles to second-grade students.

"The students and teachers were so delighted to be seeing each other 'in real life,' and some students had special messages prepared for those making the deliveries. One student was so

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Sanitizer donation made to Grand Island Police Department

BY MICHAEL J. BILLONI
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The family-owned and operated Hartman's Distilling Co. on Chicago Street in Buffalo, which normally focuses on the production of bourbon, rye, vodka, gin and craft cocktails, has shifted much of its production to bottles of hand sanitizers because of the COVID-19 crisis. In addition, it is donating one bottle of hand sanitizer for each one it sells.

Jen Hartman, a 2003 Grand Island High School graduate, who grew up on the Island and who founded the distillery with her husband, Justin, did not forget her hometown when she recently delivered six quarts and 10 four-ounce spray bottles to the Grand Island Police Department.

In addition to Hartman's donation, the GIPD received additional hand sanitizers from Ace Hardware on Whitehaven Road, while Tops Market on Grand Island Boulevard also donated containers of disinfectant wipes.

"I cannot say enough for these businesses who have taken care



Donation of Hartman's hand sanitizers to the Grand Island Police Department (Photo courtesy of GIPD)

of us in such a big way," said Robert Rine, the department's officer in charge. He said the donations came at a perfect time, because Supervisor John C. Whitney, P.E. sent a directive to all town departments that staff must wear masks and all vehicles must be kept clean at all times.

Rine said the town's police force is required to wipe down the interior of each car before and after each shift.

He has also been able to share some of the donations with the Erie County Sheriff's Department, the island's primary police department, which shares space in the Whitehaven Road headquarters.

"We use these hand sanitizers all the time, especially in the office," Rine said. "We are so grateful to the Hartman's and Ace Hardware for this donation and to Tops for the much-needed wipes."

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Jen Hartman, left, and Justin, her husband and co-founder of Hartman's Distillery (Photo courtesy of Hartman's Distillery)



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