

Sweet Dreamzzz delivers sleep kits

On Nov. 14, more than 1,500 students at Detroit Public Schools' Bennett Elementary and O.W. Holmes Elementary participated in Sweet Dreamzzz Detroit's Rest, Educate, Motivate (R.E.M.) program, which provides sleep kits and educates students on the importance of sleep.

"Sweet Dreamzzz Detroit's R.E.M. program is based on the belief that a well-rested child will perform better in school," said Kathleen Donnelly, executive director, Sweet Dreamzzz Detroit. "We supply children with the means to receive a good night's rest in hopes of making that belief a reality."



Ross Henri and Karen Fenske assemble sturdy cartons for packing.

Second- through fifth-grade students were introduced to the R.E.M. program as volunteers performed skits that illustrated sleep tips. Choirs from University of Detroit Jesuit High School & Academy and North Farmington High School and guitarist Jay Thomson serenaded the children with lullabies.

All students, pre-kindergarten through fifth grade, were taught sleep education tips in their classrooms by volunteer "Sleepers Teachers" and received a sleep kit containing a sleeping bag, pillow, night-shirt, toothbrush, toothpaste, R.E.M. activity book, crayons and stuffed animal.

Bennett Elementary and O.W. Holmes Elementary are the first schools to benefit from the Sweet Dreamzzz Detroit R.E.M. program. The

program was developed with the assistance of the National Center on Sleep Disorders Research, which is part of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health.

"The NCSDR has generously donated resources and materials to educate Detroit school children on the importance of a healthy sleep routine," said Donnelly.

In addition to Bennett and O.W. Holmes Elementary Schools, Sweet Dreamzzz Detroit will provide Detroit's St. Cunequides Elementary School and Salvation Army's Women and Children's Shelter with 450 bedtime packages for distribution to at-risk children.

In preparation for the Sweet Dreamzzz Detroit R.E.M. Program, more than 100 vol-

unteers from metro Detroit spent four hours on Nov. 12 in an office space, donated by Schostak Brothers, assembling 2,000 sleep kits and loading them into two semi-trucks by Detroit Diesel.

The kits were then delivered to the schools and unloaded with the help of University of Detroit High School students.

Schools are selected for the Sweet Dreamzzz Detroit R.E.M. program when at least 75 percent of the student population is at or below poverty level. This percentage is determined by the number of students enrolled in the federal free and reduced lunch program.

Schools also must be actively involved in the preparation and facilitation of the Sweet Dreamzzz Detroit R.E.M. program.



PHOTOS BY DALL GRESLER | OBSERVER

Volunteers begin the huge job of packing all of the items.



Nicole Lane and Tina Donigan fold Sweet Dreamz t-shirts.

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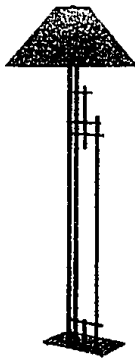
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