



The Village of Glenview

NEWS RELEASE

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'PROJECT BEAR HUG' DONATES STUFFED ANIMALS TO FIRE DEPARTMENT

September 20, 2017 – The Glenview Fire Department took delivery September 18 of a gurney-full of stuffed animals collected and donated by three enterprising Glenview teens.

Lila Becker and her friends, Hannah Sawyer and Tricia Newman, all 13, established “Project Bear Hug” in June after talking with Glenview Fire Chief Ralph Ensign about providing stuffed animals for children transported on ambulances.

The idea was hatched while the three girls were attending a summer school STEM class at District 34’s Attea Middle School. “I was reading a book on philanthropic ideas for kids,” Lila said. “We said, ‘Let’s do this.’ “

Armed with an endorsement letter from Chief Ensign, the seventh-grade girls set up a website and asked for donations of new stuffed animals from family, friends and neighbors. Their mission was to “send off teddy bears and other stuffed animals to local first responders so that they may give them to children going through a variety of crises,” according to the website.

After they’d collected three dozen, they delivered them to Fire Station 6, 1215 Waukegan Road, on September 18.

Chief Ensign said two of the stuffed animals will be stowed on each of Glenview’s four ambulances. When children are transported, firefighter/paramedics can offer them as a way to comfort or calm their fears.

“It’s a lot more traumatic for a child to ride in an ambulance than an adult,” Chief Ensign said. “This is going to help some kids who are not having a good experience.”

Because children are only occasionally transported by ambulance in Glenview, the girls plan to investigate how to donate to hospitals and social service agencies that deal with children going through rough or scary circumstances.

For more information, go online to projectbearhug.weebly.com.

Captions:

(photo 1)

Stuffed animals donated by (first row, from left) Hannah Sawyer and Lila Becker, both 13, filled a stretcher at Fire Station 6. They were received by (back row, from left) Firefighter/paramedics Chase Olson, Tim O'Shea and Jeff Burdorf and Fire Chief Ralph Ensign.

(photo 2)

Firefighter/paramedics Chase Olson, Tim O'Shea and Jeff Burdorf wheel a gurney full of donated stuffed animals to an ambulance at Fire Station 6, accompanied by donors Hannah Sawyer (left) and Lila Becker.

(photo 3)

Firefighter/paramedic Tim O'Shea watches as Lila Becker (front) and Hannah Sawyer pick out stuffed animals to stow on the ambulance to help calm children when they're transported.

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