

## **CNE collaboration provides secure NEST for learning**

**For too many students, the end of the school day means the end of learning. Clermont Northeastern School District and a local educational advocate want to shatter that paradigm.**

**CNE is collaborating with NEST Community Learning Center to keep the development going after children leave campus. NEST is based in Loveland and has been working with students in that district since its founding in 2016.**

**Founder Evangeline DeVol is a lifelong educator with a strong and clear beliefs about how the system works – or often doesn't work – in the United States, and has put her vision into action. More specifically, she has put her vision on wheels.**

**NEST operates mobile units – repurposed RVS, park-and-ride buses etc ... – and takes them into the communities they serve. There, they provide nutrition and tutoring help in a calm, quiet environment. NEST, in fact, stands for Nutrition and Education in a Safe Environment equals Transformation. NEST has approximately 200 volunteers – trained, screened and certified – who work with the students.**

**“We put ourselves on wheels because we needed to take everything we possibly could, take all of the obstacles away from these kids, getting the academic help that they need,” DeVol said. “We believe that every child is precious and that every child has skills and abilities and things that are very unique to themselves, that if you nurture it and encourage it and are in their lives every day almost all year around, then these kids will feel confident, they will have all of the materials they will need that will literally change their lives.”**

**Superintendent Michael Brandt approached DeVol about the partnership when he learned that NEST was looking to expand beyond Loveland. NEST received a \$109,000 grant from Impact 100, a Sharonville-based group that “empowers women to dramatically improve lives by collectively funding significant grants that make a lasting impact in our community.”**

Wayne Johnson, CNE's preschool director, said the district had wanted the collaboration to be in place by now, but the grant process and coronavirus-related factors delayed that. The goal, according to DeVol, is to have vans in the community by Oct. 5, initially at the Zebulon Park Apartments, though the agreement



NEST has five mobile learning units for its collaborations with Loveland and Clermont Northeastern school districts. PHOTOS PROVIDED/NEST COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER



Students do their homework in a NEST mobile unit.

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between NEST and CNE provides for two mobile units.

“The vans are going to be at locations that have a large number of kids. The vans will move around and park at locations daily with a very visible schedule

for everyone to know when and where the vans will be daily,” Johnson said. Expect to see vans at apartment complexes within the school district. The district has provided NEST office space in the professional development/preschool building in Owensville, Johnson said. He serves as the director of the preschool.

Clermont Northeastern is almost five times larger than Loveland in square miles – 78 to 17.

NEST staff and volunteers will visit homes in the CNE district, explaining who they are and asking parents if they want to register their children for the program. Teachers can also refer students.

“No two children obviously learn the same way, but because of the system we do have here in the United States, we tend to, we don’t have as much flexibility as we probably really need for a lot of these kids, so all of that being said, NEST Community Learning Center was established to be that academic piece at home for these kids to partner with the schools, so that we could extend the reach of what these kids were doing in school back out to where these kids live,” DeVol said.

When students enter a NEST mobile unit, they will receive snacks (two pieces of fruit they can eat there and two they can take home, DeVol said), and volunteers will tutor them and help them with homework.

Students can expect to spend about an hour and a half in the van, though not all learning is confined inside the vehicle. DeVol gave an example of a ninth-grade biology student who was studying the circulatory system, so tutors gave the student chalk and had them draw a map of the circulatory system on the parking lot, walk it, and then describe each part.

DeVol said a consistent presence is important. NEST units may stay as late as 9 p.m.; the program has served as many as 275 students in one day in Loveland.

“The kids that we do work with and come every day, we tell them if you do come everyday and you do your homework and you work with me, we will never let you down, and we’re working with a lot of the same kids we’ve been working with since we started, and we’ve followed their career all the way through the end,” DeVol said.

The agreement between NEST and CNE is for three years, Johnson said, but DeVol described it as “open-ended.

“We’ll determine when they’re ready to take this over, if ever. We will always be the mother ship on this,” she said.

“It’s an exciting thing. We’re lucky to have it,” Johnson said.

*Dick Maloney, Clermont Northeastern School District*



**NEST tutors work with students in mobile units, helping with homework and providing nutrition. NEST COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER/PROVIDED**