

Urbandale High School Students Launch Hope In Action

Urbandale High School students launch a student-led organization with a mission to spread hope in the community through action

URBANDALE, Iowa – November 21, 2017 – “Urbandale High School will change the world” is not only serving as the new vision for [Urbandale High School \(UHS\)](#) students and staff, but perhaps is also serving as a call-to-action for J-Hawks seeking to make a positive difference in the lives of fellow students, staff, families and community members. In addition to raising enough funds to support 12,827 meals for the Food Bank of Iowa in partnership with STAR 102.5 during Combat Hunger Rivalry Week last month, UHS students recently launched a new student-led organization, Hope In Action, whose mission is to spread hope in the community through action. UHS senior Maya Sims leads the organization, in partnership with faculty advisor Jon Parrott, to involve and empower students to use their voice, ideas and actions to change the world.

“Hope In Action is striving to plant hope in our community through action by addressing various social issues,” said Sims. “The idea is if we plant a little hope over here and a little hope over there and so on, eventually there will be an entire world full of hope because people will latch on to the hope we’ve planted and go plant their own. The amazing thing is that we’ve already seen this taking place. Cassi Killam planted a bit of hope when she took our Little Library project one step further and suggested we actually go read with the kids. Evan Smith planted a bit of hope when he volunteered his time and resources to make one of our libraries. A handful of Urbandale students planted lots of pieces of hope when they helped the Babies Need Boxes organization. Hope In Action is about more than just volunteering here and there, it’s about planting hope in the community in a way that inspires others to do the same.”

In early November, Hope In Action members built and installed a little free library in the Des Moines Oakridge neighborhood. Students wanted to share the power of words through beloved novels, picture-books and poetry in order to spread hope and goodwill.

“It was so liberating to have the opportunity to build a little free library that would impact children's lives through the use of literature,” said UHS senior Ashton Smith.

“It’s really cool to know that you’re doing something that will directly impact the life of someone else in a positive fashion,” said UHS junior Riley Vander Hart.

“I actually enjoyed the outcome of it,” said UHS junior Evan Smith. “I had a lot of a fun today and it showed me how little things can help the community in bigger ways.”



Evan Smith, Hope In Action member, standing next to the little free library that he built.

Recently, Hope In Action connected with Taylor McKee from the Iowa Homeless Youth Center to learn more about what the center is doing and how UHS students can become involved. Students embraced what they heard and took action by providing hands-on support for Babies Need Boxes which is a non-profit organization that provides families a safe-sleep environment for their newborn babies.



Hope In Action members in front of 150 boxes they built in support of Babies Need Boxes.

“UHS has had a long history with clubs like Best Buddies, Leo Club, and Key Club, doing great service in our community connected to their parent organizations (Lions, Kiwanis, Best Buddies),” said UHS Principal Tim Carver. “Maya came in this summer to talk about inspiring activism and hope through this new student organization. She and Mr. Parrott shared about their vision that through taking action to help others in need, not only does the person receiving get hope that someone cares but also the one giving has hope built in themselves. It was clear from the start that their mission aligned directly to our vision for UHS. As we look at Hope In Action’s work this far, they (along with other clubs at UHS) are doing just that...changing the world...through action!”

Hope In Action is a great example of the power of purpose. Urbandale Community School District (Urbandale CSD) is incredibly proud of these students for bringing their idea to life and taking proactive, positive and purposeful action to spread hope throughout the community. One step, followed by another, followed by another creates one's path and the district is sure that the path these students are creating will indeed, change the world. To learn more about Urbandale CSD, visit: UrbandaleSchools.com and follow on Twitter [@UrbandaleCSD](https://twitter.com/UrbandaleCSD).



About Urbandale Community School District

The Urbandale Community School District includes portions of Des Moines and Urbandale, Iowa. The District serves over 3,900 students in six elementary schools, one middle school and one comprehensive high school. The Urbandale District supports an increasingly diverse student population where 47 languages are spoken. Building on the existing foundation of excellence in education, Urbandale is transforming education throughout the District. By implementing innovative [Quality/Continual Improvement](#) strategies that create learning environments that more fully engage, challenge and motivate students, Urbandale is taking transformation from theory into practice. Urbandale prepares students for becoming lifelong learners and is a school district that brings learning to life for everyone. To learn more, visit: UrbandaleSchools.com and follow on Twitter [@UrbandaleCSD](https://twitter.com/UrbandaleCSD).

Urbandale Community School District
11152 Aurora Avenue
Urbandale, IA 50322

Contact:

Dena Soenke
Communications
Urbandale Community School District
soenked@urbandaleschools.com
(515) 868-1879

###