

ANGUS JUNIORS SERVE GRAND ISLAND SCHOOLS

Junior members serve local schools with supplies, donations at the 2023 National Junior Angus Show.

by Sarah Kocher, American Angus Association



A little generosity goes a long way, especially when hundreds of people give a little. That truth came to life with the 2023 “Service to Schools” Angus Impact project, which resulted in more than 700 items and packages of supplies, in addition to a monetary donation, being collected for public schools in Grand Island, Neb.

Most of the backpacks, headphones, crayons, pencils, erasers and other school supplies given by exhibitors at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) have been directed to Howard Elementary School, a Title I school in the district.

“Howard is definitely looking for opportunities to provide things for their students in a tangible way, and school supplies definitely fit that mold,” says Mitchell Roush, director of communications and marketing with Grand Island Public Schools.

Across the United States, Title I status and subsequent federal funding allows schools greater flexibility as they meet the needs of learners from low-income families.

“Unfortunately, this isn’t unique to us,” Roush says. “There are families [across the United States] that have a hard time being able to capture everything they need to get their students ready for school. Anything that helps lessen that burden, it’s going to be beneficial. It’s going to be beneficial for the families because they feel confident about sending their children to the school, and it’s going to be beneficial for the student because they get to be excited — just like everybody else — about coming to school with fresh school supplies.”

Angus junior member Cailee Flood says she was drawn to contribute to the 2023 project because she wanted to support other young people in their education.

“I feel like for a lot of kids, school is hard enough

to afford the supplies or whatever the reasoning may be,” she says. “I feel like it’s really important that we’re able to support them like that, and be able to provide them with supplies that they need so maybe they can have an easier time getting their education.”

According to the U.S. Department of Education, school districts with less than 300 total students in their kindergarten through high school classes typically have the highest total Title I allocations per student as compared to other districts. With many Angus juniors living in rural communities that might fit those criteria, this service project felt personal to many members.

Angus junior member Lane Toledo, who has attended the NJAS for five summers, shares why he was interested in supporting the 2023 “Service to Schools” theme.

“Since I can relate to some of these kids receiving the supplies, it felt a little more important to me this year,” Toledo says. “There are so many underserved communities and undereducated kids out there, that if they had the funds and if they had the supplies and the backing, they could do so much better and so well in life. They just need a little help.”

The Howard Elementary School’s principal, Jessica

Lona Sims (from left), Tennessee; Lane Koupal, South Dakota; and Weston Koupal, South Dakota, drop off donations for the 2023 “Service to Schools” Angus Impact project.



NATIONAL JUNIOR ANGUS SHOW



Members of the California Junior Angus Association pose with Grand Island Public Schools representative Jennifer Worthington, who is holding the donation check.

Schroeder, expressed appreciation and shares why the donations will be effective in serving students.

“We would like to thank the participants of the National Junior Angus Show for their school supply donations to Howard Elementary,” she says. “Your donations help students have supplies to start the school year. The beginning of the year is an exciting time, and having new supplies to use aids in that excitement.”

Angus Impact is the official community service program of the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA). J. Gordon Clark, vice chair of the 2022-2023 junior board and a Virginia junior member, talks about why “Service to Schools” was chosen as this year’s theme.

“We knew we wanted to have a positive impact on the community, and we are a junior association, so we wanted to have a positive impact on kids,” he says.

In previous years, Angus Impact projects have supported natural disaster relief and food insecurity, serving communities wherever the NJAS is hosted or wherever there is a great need.

This year’s Angus Impact collection primarily took place during check-in and opening ceremonies July 2-3 at NJAS. Representatives from Grand Island Public Schools accepted the monetary and in-kind gifts from the association July 7 during a break in the owned heifer show.

Flood, Toledo and other California Junior Angus Association members surpassed expectations by organizing a fundraiser totaling \$600 through a 5K race their state hosted at the national show. Participants could elect to donate \$5 on top of the regular race fee to benefit Howard Elementary School students. Sixty-five of the 95 participants chose to donate the \$5 amount or more.

“The majority of those people donated to Angus Impact because they can also relate,” Toledo says. “I think everyone pitched in because they felt for what the cause is.”

Flood was also moved by the support of the Angus family.

“I think that says a lot about the Angus organization as well,” she says. “Whether they relate to it or not, they’re still giving back because that’s just the type of people they are.”

Due to their generosity, Angus

juniors and their families made an even larger impact than they set out to make.

Jennifer Worthington, chief of community and stakeholder engagement with Grand Island Public Schools, says the additional dollars will allow the district to fill in some gaps other schools in their district might have during the academic year. As a district with more than 10,000 students among 19 schools, 14 of them elementary, every bit helps.

The supplies and monetary support will not only help students but also educators, especially those at Howard Elementary.

“Having supplies provided like this at the building level is going to be huge for our staff, to be able to support our students and to know they’re going to be able to give them what they need,” Roush says. **AJ**

