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Baldwin Park Unified Students Access Resources through Community Closet

BALDWIN PARK – Baldwin Park High School students and families looking for a new outfit for school or a new notebook for class are finding essential resources through the school’s new Community Care Closet initiative, which provides gently used clothes, hygiene products and school supplies at no cost.

Partnering with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) through its Community Schools Initiative, Baldwin Park High’s Community Care Closet, located in the Family Resource Room, is open every Wednesday from 3:30 to 6 p.m.

“The Community Care Closet has already proven to be a tremendous resource for Baldwin Park families,” Baldwin Park High/LACOE Educational Community Worker Taily Pulido said. “We are caring for each other within the community, supporting families with basic needs, and providing a nurturing environment for students as we work to ensure they stay focused on their education.”

Baldwin Park High students have embraced the Community Care Closet with enthusiasm, using it as an opportunity for thrifting and appreciating its sustainability and selection, with clothes for everyone in the family – men, women, boys, girls and babies. The Care Closet also stocks a wide variety of school supplies, care packages of hygiene products, as well as jewelry and toys.

Baldwin Park High School senior Benjohn Balanza first visited the Community Care Closet at the beginning of the 2021-22 school year, looking for a nice outfit for his senior portrait.

Looking through the suits, Balanza was stunned to see one that was his size and in his favorite color. After acquiring the suit, Balanza decided to join the Community Care Closet staff as a volunteer.

“It was serendipitous. I couldn’t believe my luck,” Balanza said. “From that point on I wanted to be involved. I want to spread the word to my classmates that there is such a great resource for them on campus. It’s a really good thing for our community.”

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The Community Care Closet has served about 15 students each week since opening its doors in October, distributing items donated by community members and staying open late to better serve students participating in extracurricular activities.

Due to limited space the Community Care Closet is not accepting donations at this time, but will be scheduling quarterly public donation drives, with the next donation drive scheduled for later this month.

The Community Schools Initiative is a partnership between LACOE and 15 high schools throughout the Southland that serve as community hubs, designed to offer a wide range of support services for students and families and improve the academic, emotional and physical well-being of students.

The Baldwin Park High Community School Resource Center has a full-time program specialist and educational community worker to strengthen participation and support parent engagement. There is also a parent center where families can access resources like Cal-Fresh, Fair Housing support and the 211 for Schools outreach helpline. Student mental well-being is supported by the Teen Line crisis hotline.

“As part of the Community Schools partnership with LACOE, Baldwin Park Unified is providing services and outreach to the community members who need it the most,” Superintendent Dr. Froilan N. Mendoza said. “Community Care Closet shows how compassion, empathy and a willingness to help others is prevalent throughout the District, and helps us come together as a community.”

PHOTO

BPUSD_BPHS Community Care Closet: Baldwin Park High School students browse the selection of the school’s Community Care Closet for sustainable shopping options.

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