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NEWS RELEASE

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Covina-Valley Unified's Colt Outfitters Thrift Shop Wins Golden Bell Award, Showcasing Student Support

COVINA, CA – Covina High School's student-run thrift shop, Colt Outfitters, which offers students affordable access to clothing, school supplies, backpacks, books, and toiletries, has won a Golden Bell award from the California School Boards Association, recognizing the shop's innovation and impact on supporting students.

Established in the 2021-22 school year by the school's Interact club, Colt Outfitters offers students essentials, with most items priced at \$2 or less. Colt Outfitters serves not only as a resource for students but also as a learning environment for those in the Life-Skills Education Advancement Program (LEAP), which helps special education students develop real-world skills. LEAP students assist with running the store, learning social skills that will help them succeed in future jobs and life beyond high school.

"Colt Outfitters is different from other school thrift shops," said Gianna Herrera, a Covina High senior and president of the Interact Club. "Our store is filled with Colt pride and teaches us the need to be involved in our community. It's a small step to show us the impact we can have on the future, and really helps our whole school become closer."

Colt Outfitters aims to help students who may not have the time, resources, or access to shop for essentials on their own. Additionally, administrators, counselors, supervisors, staff, and faculty members at Covina High actively identify students dealing with special circumstances, such as homelessness, financial challenges, or those who are recent immigrants. These students are taken to the thrift store discreetly and are allowed to take as many items as they need for free.

"Colt Outfitters is more than just a thrift shop; it's a support system," Covina High principal Dr. Daisy Carrasco said. "It ensures that every student has access to the essentials they need to thrive, while also creating opportunities for personal growth, community involvement, and meaningful connections."

The shop has grown significantly over the years, continuing to receive donations from local families and the community.

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“The response to Colt Outfitters has been overwhelming,” Herrera said. “We have a whole room next to the shop filled with boxes of donations that we can’t fit into the shop itself yet. Each year, the impact just continues to grow.”

For the fourth consecutive year, Covina-Valley Unified high schools have earned the prestigious Golden Bell award, with Covina High School achieving back-to-back recognitions. In the 2023-24 school year, Covina High was recognized for its Agriculture Career Technical Education (CTE) program. The previous year, Northview High School received the award for its Fine Arts, Media, and Entertainment CTE pathway. In the 2021-22 school year, South Hills High School was recognized for its innovative on-campus Wellness Center and Peer Counseling program.

“Colt Outfitters is just one example of the outstanding work happening across our schools,” said Covina-Valley Unified School District Superintendent Dr. Elizabeth Eminhizer. “Our programs go beyond the classroom, blending compassion, community service, and practical skills to prepare students for lifelong success. The continued achievements of all our high schools demonstrate our dedication to supporting and empowering every student for success.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

CVUSD_OUTFITTERS1: Covina High School’s student-run thrift shop, Colt Outfitters, has won a Golden Bell award from the California School Boards Association, recognizing the shop’s innovation and impact on supporting students.

CVUSD_OUTFITTERS2: Colt Outfitters serves as a learning environment for those in the Life-Skills Education Advancement Program (LEAP), which helps special education students develop real-world skills. LEAP students assist with running the store, learning social skills that will help them succeed in future jobs and life beyond high school.

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