

---

## Stark MHAR delivers care packages to local schools

By Shane Hoover

CantonRep.com staff writer

Posted Nov 26, 2018 at 1:31 PM

Self-care kits intended to help teachers, administrators and staff manage stress.

CANTON Select schools across the county are getting care packages this week designed to help teachers and staff members deal with stress.

Stark County Mental Health and Addiction Recovery staffers packed the white self-care baskets last week and started making deliveries on Monday.

The baskets contain stress balls, a Rubik's cube, coloring books, peppermints and other "be nice to yourself kinds of things," said Allyson Rey, Stark MHAR's director of marketing, communications and community relations.

"It's not easy to be a human being right now," Rey said.

The baskets are intended to remind teachers, staff and administrators to take a moment for themselves, but can be used by anyone. The baskets were paid for with Stark MHAR dollars and a portion of a Sisters of Charity grant.

Three baskets apiece are going to 10 school buildings in five local districts. The schools receiving baskets have lost a student to suicide.

"We're hearing that everybody's stressed," said Allison Esber, Stark MHAR's systems initiative manager. "We live in a society where stress is so common but last year was one of the most challenging years people have experienced."

County school administrators along with public health and mental health agencies have been focused on youth suicide and mental health following the deaths of 12 middle and high school students last school year.

A subsequent survey of more than 15,000 local students in grades 7 through 12 found that 1 in 5 students had thought of suicide, and 1 in 11 had attempted suicide at least once. Three in 10 students said they had experienced a mental health problem.

“We know teachers do more than teach, now,” Esber said. “They are another support system.”

And a central part of taking care of others is to take care of yourself, she said. It’s why Stark MHAR has self-care baskets around its own office.

*Reach Shane at 330-580-8338 or [shane.hoover@cantonrep.com](mailto:shane.hoover@cantonrep.com)*

*On Twitter: [@shooverREP](https://twitter.com/shooverREP)*