



## Communications

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# WESTLAKE 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADER HELPS CITY MISSION THROUGH SOCKTOBER

A chance meeting with a homeless man on the streets of Columbus set in motion a plan by a Dover Elementary School fourth grader to create Socktober.

Last fall, the Hill family took a trip to Columbus when Ryan noticed a homeless man on the street. They shared a few dollars with him and moved on, but a few rainy days later Ryan couldn't shake his concern for the homeless. What do they do in bad weather?

Ryan and his mother, Jennifer Hill, searched Cleveland homeless shelters online and found The City Mission. When Hill explained that's where the homeless can go in the rain and snow, Ryan's next question was "How do we help them?"

Hill reached out to The City Mission and learned that socks and underwear are their most needed items.

"Because they have to be new, and most people only donate their used items, socks are a huge need," Hill said. "They are also really easy to ask for and collect – unlike underwear, which can be uncomfortable for a little boy to go around talking about."

Ryan decided to go to places where he sees a lot of people and ask to set up a collection box. He placed boxes at Dover Elementary, Westlake Early Childhood PTA, North Olmsted Recreation Center where he plays hockey, Westlake City Hall, the Westlake Police Department and Goddard School in Westlake, where Ryan is an alum.

Last year Ryan collected more than 2,500 pairs of socks. This year he collected 1,650. Ryan and his family will drop their collected socks off before Thanksgiving.

"The City Mission is in desperate need," Hill said, adding that people didn't have a lot to give after donating to hurricane relief efforts this year. "We're teaching

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the boys you can't just keep going back to the well and ask. You have to think about how people can and will give."

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