

# Nonprofit donates furniture to CLPS

By Maria Allard 



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CENTER LINE/WARREN — When the Center Line Public Schools \$58.7 million bond proposal for district upgrades and repairs failed at the polls May 2, school officials returned to the drawing board to brainstorm other funding sources.

One nonprofit organization that CLPS Chief Financial Officer Charlie Roddis found was the We Are Here Foundation, and he soon struck up a conversation with the foundation's manager, Tom Cleaver.

The all-volunteer organization — based in Mount Clemens — donates new school and office furniture to districts in southeastern Michigan, and earlier this month donated approximately \$12,000-\$15,000 worth of equipment to CLPS.

The district received approximately 66 school desks, 17 file cabinets, two principal desks, 24 roller chairs and 19 whiteboards. The new furniture will be distributed throughout the district.



Center Line Public Schools Chief Financial Officer Charlie Roddis sits on one of the chairs that the We Are Here Foundation donated. (Photo by Maria Allard)

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“I’m always looking for resources and called Tom and told him we had a big need for whiteboards, tables and chairs,” Roddis said. “We began a relationship of working together. We appreciate all Tom and his foundation have done for us.”

On average, the We Are Here Foundation donates approximately \$200,000 per year in school and office furniture to school districts in need. The foundation’s primary source of income comes from donated boats, cars and its corporate partner — office supply retailer Staples. Monetary donations also are welcome.



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The image features a group of diverse children with their arms raised in excitement, set against a background of colorful circles. The text is overlaid on the top and middle of the image.

“Center Line, like all districts, is a little short in the pocket,” Cleaver said. “I asked them to put together a wish list.”

The We Are Here Foundation not only provides school furniture, but also participates in waterway cleanup and youth education groups. According to Cleaver, the group’s efforts have removed more than 8.5 million pounds of debris from the Clinton River and Lake St. Clair over the past 20 years.

Cleaver said the We Are Here Foundation also has plans to donate sporting equipment to the Warren Police Athletic League. PAL is a youth crime prevention program that uses educational, athletic and recreational activities to create trust and understanding between police officers and local youths.

For more information on the We Are Here Foundation or to make a donation, call (586) 463-9400 or email Tom Cleaver at [cleave@aol.com](mailto:cleave@aol.com). Currently, the organization does not have a website or a social media page.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Staff Writer Maria Allard covers the school districts of Center Line, Fitzgerald, Van Dyke, Warren Consolidated and Warren Woods, and Macomb Community College for the Warren Weekly newspaper. She also covers the City of Grosse Pointe Woods and the Grosse Pointe Public Schools System for the Grosse Pointe Times newspaper. Allard has a bachelor’s degree in journalism from Wayne State University, and she is in love with the Rolling Stones.*