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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**“Gutchies for Kids”**

“Gutchies for Kids” program began with the Quota International Club of Hermitage and was introduced to New Castle by then President, Connie McMichaels, Connerly’s Cleaners and the United Way of Lawrence County. “Gutchies” is Western Pennsylvania slang for underwear. Connie started collecting items such as underwear, socks, pajamas, and long underwear for children in our area, and distributing them through Midwestern IU-4 throughout Lawrence County.

The “Gutchies for Kids” program is sponsored by American Federation State County Municipal Employee, AFSCME 2902. President Charl Cox said, “this program helps the most vulnerable population in our community and we are proud to support this effort.”

United Way has been working with many families dealing with various issues such as homelessness and these items are very much needed especially in this winter season. Items in the past have been distributed by the New Castle School District and by Midwestern IU-4. Wendy Kinnear Regional Coordinator for Homeless & Foster Care Children in our area stated, “Children are often coming from homes where these items are scarce and unfortunately this issue continues to grow in our region”. Brian Rice, Social Worker, New Castle School District, Lockley Elementary, stated that, “this program has helped so many children in need of the most basic items, such as underwear, socks, t-shirts, and long underwear.”

The “Gutchies for Kids” drive will run until March 31 and the sizes for boys and girls will start with size 4 – 2xl. Businesses in our area are supporting this program by providing drop off sites such as: Arts & Education at the Hoyt, Connerly’s Cleaners, The Confluence, Lawrence County Government Center, Rep. Chris Sainato, Spiritual Path Church, Berkshire Hathaway Real Estate, New Wilmington, Stramba Farm and Fiber Mill, Wampum and United Way of Lawrence County.

If any organization, church, club, or business would like to participate in the collection, please feel free to contact our office at 724.658.8528 or visit our website at [www.uwlawcty.org](http://www.uwlawcty.org).