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January 18, 2024

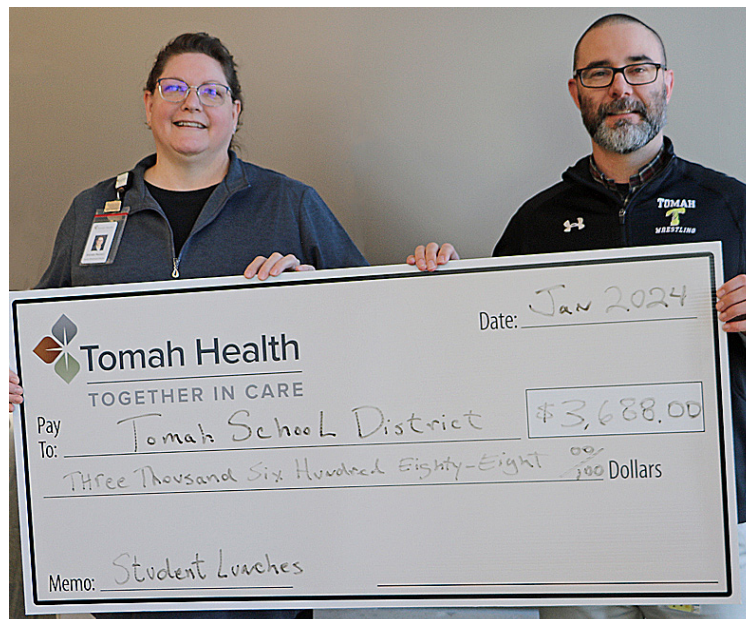
QUESTIONS?communications@tomah.education*Tomah Health helps out students in need***Donates funds to help cover negative meal accounts**

Tomah school district students in need of financial assistance for school meals got a boost thanks to staff at Tomah Health. Hospital officials donated \$3,688 to the district January 17th as a result of the 2023 Tomah Health Jeans / Scrubs program.

"It's phenomenal that you were able to raise money and donate it to the school district for students who are in need to cover negative meal accounts," Tomah School District food service director Jesse Bender said of the donation.

Bender said there is a growing trend throughout the district with more students needing financial assistance. "One thing that people don't realize is the school district is actually 53% free and reduced (lunches), which means when you walk around and look at people, one out of every two is likely in poverty. So, it's a really alarming number," said Bender. He said about 40% of students received free or reduced meals when he started with the district 15 years ago.

Hospital Human Resources director Brenda Reinert said for a small donation, hospital staff can wear jeans or their favorite scrubs on Fridays. "I think it's a great community support opportunity that we give to our staff here to be a little more casual on Friday and support a really good cause," said Reinert. She said hospital staff has already chosen to donate 2024 funds to the Tomah Area Cancer Support Group.



Tomah Health Human Resources director Brenda Reinert, left, presented the ceremonial check to Tomah Area School District food services director Jesse Bender.

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