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13,000 Local Children Receive Hats and Mittens  
In “Healthy Hero Heartwarming Heads and Hands” Distribution

Frosty the Snowman Urges Students  
To “Go Outside and Play!” Over February Break

In the largest single donation of winter clothing in Rochester’s history, Greater Rochester Health Foundation is distributing more than 13,000 sets of “Be A Healthy Hero, 5’2”10” hats and mittens to local children ages four to seven.

The “Healthy Hero Heartwarming Heads and Hands” distribution, timed to coincide with the start of February break at area schools, encourages children to go outside and play in winter weather. Children at two area schools—the ABC Head Start program on Jefferson Avenue, and Rochester’s School 33 on Webster Avenue—and Ibero-American Action League on Clifford Avenue, celebrated the donation with an active “Healthy Hero recess” where they played with Frosty the Snowman.

“As winter recess begins, we want to remind parents and kids to go outside and play, instead of spending the week indoors with inactive video games or watching TV,” said John Urban, president and CEO of the Foundation. “Kids need at least one hour a day of active, heart-pumping play. Donating this warm clothing encourages them to be ‘Healthy Heroes,’ and helps to be sure that the cold isn’t a barrier to playing outdoors.”

The winter clothing is being distributed to schools, childcare centers and community organizations whose healthy-weight activities for children age 2-10 are funded by the Foundation. More than two dozen schools and three dozen community organizations in Monroe County are participating.
Urban said that most area children know the *Be A Healthy Hero* jingle, and when they arrive at home decked out in Healthy Hero hats and mittens, it will remind parents of the 5’2’10 program’s key messages.

- Eat five fruits and veggies a day,
- Limit screen time to two hours a day
- Encourage active play for at least one hour a day
- Provide milk and water instead of sweetened juice or soda

“We would love to see neighborhoods of kids in purple Healthy Hero hats outdoors all next week—laughing, running around, playing outdoor games and building snowmen,” Urban said.

One in three children in Monroe County is overweight or obese. The Foundation has a 10-year plan to bring more children into the healthy weight range with four key strategies, including working with physicians; supporting policy and practice changes; and funding programs to improve nutrition and increase physical activity. The Healthy Hero Heart-warming Hands and Heads Distribution is part of the fourth strategy, increasing the community’s awareness of the life-long effects of unhealthy weight in children and encouraging families to make healthy lifestyle choices.