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## **CITY OF KEARNEY** **PRESS RELEASE** ***For Immediate Release***

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### **Kearney Elks Lodge #984 and the Kearney Public Library Partner with Operation Warm to Provide 80 Brand New Coats & Books to Kearney Children in Need**

#### *Nonprofit expands mission with Innovative Library Program*

Nearly 15% of children in Kearney live in families with incomes below the federal poverty line. Necessities like warm winter clothing can be hard to come by when food, housing, heat and healthcare take priority.

Kearney Elks Lodge #984 and the Kearney Public Library are partnering with Operation Warm, a national nonprofit dedicated to providing brand new winter coats to children in need, to help alleviate the financial burden of a brand new coat for families involved in the Head Start program in Kearney.

Operation Warm is teaming up with libraries and service organizations across the country to give a brand new coat and a new book to each child who participates. This unique service project not only provides children with necessities, but introduces them and their families to all that their neighborhood library branch has to offer beyond books. This program will inspire literacy and learning by helping children get to school and to their local library on cold and wintry days.

On Saturday, January 11, the Kearney Elks Lodge will provide brand new coats and the Kearney Public Library will provide new books to 80 Head Start children at Kearney Public Library through its partnership with Operation Warm. The Warm Welcome to the Library Head Start Family Connections Day will be held from 10 a.m. until noon and will include activities for the Head Start families like meeting Elroy the Elk, enjoying a puppet show by the Nebraska State Elks Major Project- "Kids on the Block", taking a tour of the library and receiving their very own library card. Refreshments will be provided by the Kearney Drove of Does.

"The Elks are very excited to partner with the Kearney Public Library and Head Start for our first Warm Welcome to the Library," said Kearney Elks Exalted Ruler Jim Wilson. "The Elks are committed to supporting Veterans and Youth and I think this is one of the best things we've taken part in." Funding for this project was made possible through a grant from the Elks National Foundation.

“Head Start is thrilled to partner with the Elks and the Kearney Public Library in the first “Warm Welcome to the Library.” Community engagement is a cornerstone of the Head Start program and strengthens family services and supports. Operation Warm which is the national partner, and local partners the Elks and the Kearney Public Library are an example of community engagement which supports parents' roles as valued community members and their progress toward their goals for themselves and their children,” Laicie Clark, Kearney Head Start Center Director, said.

“Kearney Public Library is honored to be part of this partnership. What a fantastic opportunity to provide a new coat and a free book to youth in our community, along with welcoming families to visit the Library,” said Youth Services Librarian Shawna Lindner. “I hope the positive experience with books families get through this library visit makes them excited to visit their library often.”

**Media is welcome to attend:**  
**Warm Welcome to the Library Head Start Family Connection Day**  
**Saturday, January 11 10a-noon**  
**Kearney Public Library, upper floor**  
**2020 1st Avenue**

**For more information, please contact:**  
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### **Operation Warm**

Operation Warm is a national nonprofit that creates brand new, high-quality coats for children in need. Every child, regardless of their economic situation, deserves a brand new coat. We partner with compassionate individuals and organizations across North America to give a gift of warmth, confidence and hope to millions of children in need. Operation Warm believes a brand new coat is more than a coat, promoting self-esteem, school attendance and outdoor play.

To learn more about Operation Warm, visit [OperationWarm.org](http://OperationWarm.org).

### **Partner Organization boilerplate:**

[www.operationwarm.org](http://www.operationwarm.org)  
[www.elks.org](http://www.elks.org)  
<https://cityofkearney.org/1475/Library>  
<http://communityactionmidne.com/head-start/>

**Check out our web site at [www.cityofkearney.org](http://www.cityofkearney.org).**

*We are sending this News Release as a service to the news media and citizens of Kearney.*

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