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Love in Any Language

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- Valentine's Day for many couples symbolizes the epitome of romance, but this year for Cedarville University staff and students, it will be a time to remember the homeless.

Started three years ago by department of English, literature and modern language professors Dr. Melissa Faulkner and Cyndi Messer, the 'Love Your Neighbor' event aims to develop a broader meaning of the word love. On Feb. 14, faculty, students and staff will assemble care packages that will be distributed to homeless in the Miami Valley.

The care packages will include granola bars and other snacks, toiletries, thin gloves, hand warmers, hand sanitizer and socks. Each bag will also contain a handwritten note that reads, "We're Cedarville University and we love you," as well as a Bible.

The "Love Your Neighbor" event is designed to help the campus community to think about others, not just themselves, or their personal relationships. Single students often feel left out on Valentine's Day, according to Faulkner, department chair and associate professor of English at Cedarville University.

"By having the event on Valentine's Day, we are able to focus our attention on Christ-like love rather than romantic love," said Messer, associate professor of English.

Students and faculty are donating individually wrapped items that fit into gallon-size bags; the contents of the bags will depend largely on what is donated. Faulkner hopes to assemble 100 bags this year.

The care packages will be distributed by faculty, staff and students throughout February as opportunities arise as they drive around the Miami Valley.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,193 undergraduate, graduate and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.