

Cuddly critters collected for kids

by **David Williams - Monday, July 07, 2008**

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/1009/cuddly-critters-collected-for-kids/>

Packs of assorted stuffed animals are reported to be prowling around the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.

There is no need to panic — in fact, the campus community is encouraged to add to the pretend pet population.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) will collect new or gently used stuffed animals through July 11 at the following locations: Clow Faculty, Room 29; Dempsey Hall, Rooms 201 and 211; Halsey Science Center, Room 432; Polk Library, main lobby; and the UW Oshkosh Credit Union in Reeve Memorial Union or at 90 Wisconsin St.

The stuffed animals — 12 inches in size or smaller — will be donated to Mercy Medical Center so that young patients can have something soft and comforting to hold onto before surgery.

Diane Kromm, an academic department associate in the chemistry department and a member of the EAP's Public Relations Committee, proposed the on-campus collection after learning that the hospital's supply was running low.

“The stuffed animals make such a difference to the kids,” said Kromm, adding that EAP also has coordinated a teddy bear drive for the Oshkosh Police Department in the past as well as a mittens, hats and scarves collection for underprivileged children during the winter months.

The EAP provides free consultation and referral services for UW Oshkosh employees. Additionally, the program hosts brownbag lunches for employees with such topics as gardening, financing and stress management.

“The EAP is available as a resource to UW Oshkosh employees to help them be happier and more productive in their personal and professional lives,” said Joe Abhold, director of the University Counseling Center and interim EAP director.

“It's a good fit for the Public Relations Committee to do service-oriented activities like the stuffed animal drive,” he said. “We already have bags and bags of stuffed animals.”

- For more information about EAP, visit www.uwosh.edu/eap.