

Collect for Kids

Starting school with the supplies necessary to succeed



Community Partners



Background

In 2010 Fairfax County Schools (FCPS) and OP³ collaborated to study and catalog groups providing school supplies to students who might not have them and to identify gaps in service. Because more than 55,000 children in Fairfax County qualify for free and reduced priced meals, many families simply cannot afford the cost of school supplies, which can cost as much as \$107 per child.

Challenge

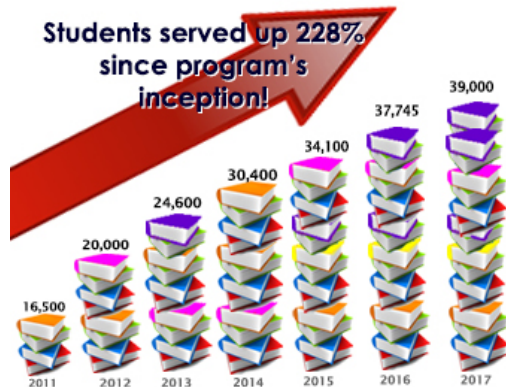
- Increase number of students served with free school supplies
- Identify and eliminate gaps in service
- Develop partnerships, build and expand mechanisms for bulk purchasing to increase buying power
- Assist local nonprofits with donations
- Create online and in-person donation capabilities
- Craft and capitalize on social marketing opportunities

Solution

OP³ and FCPS convened a group nonprofits, for-profits, and other governmental agencies willing to engage to discuss ways to increase assistance and decrease costs. Redundancies and gaps in service were identified. Groups agreed to work together under the Collect for Kids banner to provide a wider spread service. A standardized school list was developed and with the help of local discount stores, groups purchased together in bulk. To do so, a standardized school list was developed, efficiency models were expanded, new partnerships were formed, communications improved among partners and the general public (website, Facebook and more), and a monetary donations portal was created. With the help of local merchants and others, groups purchased together in bulk.

Impact

- Collect for Kids distributed more than 163,000 supply kits and backpacks since 2010
- In 2015, 70% of the children on free & reduced meals received donations
- Contributions up 14% per year for the past three years
- 106% increase in students served since inception



Sally Donnelly, a reading specialist at Westgate Elementary School, summed it up best --

“The backpack itself is a kind of uniform. This student clearly felt important, so important that he is taking his backpack wherever he goes, even back to school to hang and watch a movie. Wearing it gave him that feeling that he is cool. And when we feel cool, we feel we belong, and then we can learn.”

Corporate Partners

