

# Clothing Our Kids helps with back to school

John Smith

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Please imagine for a moment one of your first days of the new school year. Remember the new clothes your parents bought for that important first day? The new shoes, the new shirt, dress, skirt, pants or sweater.

Many of us looked mighty sharp on the first day as we went off determined to study harder, and to meet friends. Now imagine a child with no new shoes, maybe no shoes at all, no new shirt, dress, skirt or pants because his or her parents didn't have the resources to purchase them or worse, maybe the parent wasn't even around. Sad to say, but that's the reality for too many kids who live in our Sussex County community.

Our mission at the Clothing Our Kids organization is to assist those children to have appropriate school clothing and to boost their self-esteem so they can achieve excellence in their classrooms.

I thank our donors and volunteers who are the real power behind the COK operation for making our work possible.

The 2017-18 operating year came to an end June 30, and we reached another benchmark by making it possible for COK to deliver over 21,000 articles of school clothing to 3,900 kids in our area. Those deliveries are the highest in number attained in our history.

The past year turned out to be our best fundraising year. We reached this milestone because of the generosity of businesses and donors from all walks of life: corporations, foundations, Sussex County Council, churches, individual donors and, of course, our annual golf tournament.

We can't serve the needy children in our community alone. It takes a village and I want to say thank you to our donors, benefactors, and friends who made this year so great:

- Corporate donors - \$13,905
- Foundation grants - \$29,770
- Individual donors - \$20,997
- Group donations - \$23,394
- Sussex County Council grants - \$4,775

How does COK use these contributions?

The answer is that during this past operating year, 90 percent of contributed dollars went directly to our mission which is to help clothe the underprivileged children of Sussex County. The remaining 10 percent went to fundraising and administrative costs. These are admirable percentages and they could not have been achieved without help from the community. This past year's successes are a reminder that: "When you help others achieve their dreams, you will achieve yours." (Les Brown)

Thank you to the entire Sussex County community, and especially to the 150 volunteers who donate their time and talent to helping underprivileged children.

**John Smith, president**

**Clothing Our Kids**