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May 17, 2020

Dear COK Friends,

I deeply miss our wonderful friends and community! Clothing Our Kids is never out of my thoughts and I do worry and pray for all the children in need during this most uncertain time.

I am sending out this letter to advise you about a couple of happenings in our COK world. Here are some of the highlights:

After the pandemic hit us in March, we formed a COK Crisis Committee. It is made up of the Executive Committee of the Board (VP Bob Blouin, Treasurer/Secretary Mike Wezel and me) along with four other key individuals. We informed all the Board Members that we were considering closing our Volunteer Center and there was an overwhelming consensus, due to many reasons, that we should do so. On March 14th we formally closed.

And soon thereafter we sadly had to postpone our Auction Party. This Party provided over \$50,000 worth of clothes last year. At this point, the Auction Party and Golf Outing (which provided \$80,000 worth of clothes and rent, etc.) have both been cancelled for the year. This decision was not treated lightly. It was a full Board decision.

I am forever grateful that we have a reserve to operate for the next year or so without our fundraisers. The demand from the families that we are here to serve will be enormous this coming school season. We will work to order clothing soon and get prepared. COK needs to be ready by mid to late July if the schools intend to reopen.

Here is what we are doing for now during this crisis:

1. A protocol has been finalized for any requests we receive during this closure. Please know that we have already helped a women's shelter (aiding abused moms and their kids) called What is Your Voice, Inc. We provided \$500 worth of children's underwear and socks to this shelter. And as other special requests arise, we will handle each situation as received.
2. Our school liaison will contact the school nurses, social workers and interventionists within the next week. Going forward, we will handle any special requests from them as needed.



3. COK's mission and Bylaws state that we assist kids in need with appropriate school clothing. Our Bylaws also say, "From time to time other items shall be distributed". Knowing that kids are mostly at home, the Board decided to help Sussex County kids with food. We are in the process of giving the Food Bank of DE (Sussex County) a small donation on COK's behalf. Right now, our kids are mostly in need of food. And we feel this to be the best way to help them during this COVID crisis.

The Board Members and I are so grateful for all the support you have provided to the kids of Sussex County over the years. This pandemic will no doubt affect COK going forward, but we will always be here "Offering an Opportunity for every child to achieve Excellence". Your thoughts, energy, ideas, donations are all so appreciated by COK. You make a difference every day!

God bless,

Kate Gibson
President