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**CLOTHING OUR KIDS (COK) PRESS RELEASE – MAY 6
THE INCREASE IN POVERTY OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS ALIGNS WITH
NEEDS OF SUSSEX COUNTY FAMILIES FOR HELP TO CLOTHE THEIR CHILDREN.
THREE QUARTERS OF THE WAY THROUGH THE 2023/2024 SCHOOL YEAR COK
HAS DISTRIBUTED 34% MORE IN APPAREL AND SUPPORTED 13% MORE
STUDENTS OVER MARCH OF LAST YEAR**

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As reported in a COK Press Release last fall, the Supplemental Poverty Measure provided by the Census Bureau identified that poverty among children had doubled from 2021 to 2022. These figures align with the increase COK has had to purchase clothing for PreK-5th, Middle School and Head Start students. Many of our orders come directly from the School Teachers, Nurses, Social Workers, and Homeless Liaisons trying to help the families. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics consumer prices are up 3.5% since March of 2023.

As a result, COK purchasing costs for clothing have increased significantly over last year's numbers. Our Volunteers continue to work tirelessly to increase funding through our clothing drives, annual golf outing, generous grants, and grassroots fundraising. However, as we look toward the next school year our goals will be bigger to ensure our Sussex County students have an opportunity to achieve excellence no matter what their family's financial situation might be. As President Bob Blouin mentioned: "we're seeing a trend with orders received even before the school year starts while touching an increased number of children." Our approach is simple: Let Them Dress for Success.

*"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." –
Frederick Douglass.*

Our goals are to continue to offer every child an opportunity to achieve excellence. To learn more about COK and the Golf Outing fundraiser, kindly go to www.clothingourkids.org.

