Fort Wayne Chapter Basic Needs Self Esteem Building

My Stuff Backpack Program

**Timing, duration, frequency of program**

Annually, usually 6 times per year

**Fiscal Information**

Budgeted expense total for program last year: $10,000

Value of in-kind donations (estimated total): $3,200

**Partnerships**

YWCA Crisis Shelter, Vincent Village, Charis House, Safe Families for Children, Foster Care Parent Association of Allen County, Just Neighbors Interfaith Homeless Shelter, National Youth Advocacy Program.

These agencies serve homeless families, homeless single mothers with their children, children in crisis (through foster care) and women and children in a crisis situation (example: domestic violence). We provide each child with a backpack.

**Clients**

Number of children/families served your last fiscal year: 598

Age range of clients served: 3-16

**Volunteers**

How many volunteers participate in this program (planning and working) 51

Volunteers pick up ordered or donated items for backpacks; they shop for needed items, take inventory, unpack inventory, sort books, set up the line for packing backpacks, and deliver backpacks to agencies

**Program Description**

Overall goal of this program: Provide homeless children or children who have been removed from their home in a crisis situation a backpack full of personal items and school supplies.

What service/materials do you provide to your clients? Each backpack contains age and gender specific toys, books, soap, shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, hair brush or comb, hair ties, crayons, markers, or colored pencils, notebooks, pencils, erasers, pens, pencil sharpener, coloring/activity book, sketch pad, Kleenex, dental floss, calculator, first aid kit, glue sticks, highlighters, deodorant, feminine products, and a stuffed animal.

"My Stuff" Backpacks begins in January as members talk to each agency to assess their needs for the coming year. Each agency submits the number of backpacks projected for the year divided by age and gender. Based on this number, backpacks are ordered first, an inventory of all items is done in February, orders are placed in March and unpacked in April. Volunteers pack half of the year's need in May and deliver the backpacks to agencies. June/July are non-work months. School supplies are purchased late July/early August at back to school sales. In September, school supplies are unpacked for the 2nd half of year with packing and delivery in November. Occasionally, book sorting takes place in October or another non-work month.

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