

## **PROJECT NAME: Fostering Komfort**

JCEO's Community Action Angels

### **PURPOSE:**

**The main purpose of the Fostering Komfort project is to ease the transition to a new home for foster children.** The project was born out of the surge of children entering foster care in Clinton County due to the devastating heroin epidemic. Children are removed from their homes because of their parent's addictions. Many times, children have to move quickly and they may not have a chance to gather their things. Other times, they do not have anything to bring to their new foster home.

**The goal of the project is to provide a backpack of items for children entering the foster care system, so they can make a more comfortable transition.** Each backpack contains basic hygiene items and a comfort item. The backpacks are tailored to gender and age so they can be distributed appropriately by the Department of Social Services.

### **PROJECT PARTNERS:**

- Joint Council for Economic Opportunity of Clinton and Franklin Counties (JCEO)
- JCEO's Community Action Angels
- Department of Social Services (Clinton and Franklin Counties)
- Plattsburgh Kiwanis Breakfast Club
- Beekmantown Varsity Boys Hockey Team

### **PARTNER RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Ensure a ready supply of hygiene and comfort items for children in foster care as they transition to new living arrangements
- Eliminate the "trash bag transfer"
- Improve/enable self-esteem of foster children in transition
- Make transition to new home as smooth as possible

### **PARTNERSHIP AND AGENCY BENEFITS:**

- Be part of making life a bit easier for foster children in transition
- Take an active role in addressing the effects of the opioid epidemic
- Collaborate among community organizations, vendors/suppliers, etc.
- See fruits of their efforts in real life
- Development of staff capabilities--fund raising, organization, leadership, collaboration skills

### **FOSTER CHILD BENEFITS:**

- As a starting point, having basic hygiene needs readily met, smoothing the transition from one residence to another in the form of necessities and small comfort items
- Having an appropriate packaging for personal items versus 'a trash bag'
- Knowing that others are caring for them and wanting to help them in their transition (setting them up for success in their new home)

PROJECT ACTIVITIES--Community Action Angels:

1. Coordinate with Department of Social Services to determine need, as well as how the bags will be stored and distributed.
2. Determine and raise funding needed. Ask for donations on social media and in the press. Consider hosting a Community Baby Shower. Other ideas for donations may include dental offices (for toothbrushes and toothpaste), hotels, and service organizations such as Rotary, Lions Club, and Key Club.
3. Shop for all supplies (we have mainly used the Dollar Store and Sam's Club). Pack the backpacks according to four categories: newborn – 3 years, 4-10 years, 11+ girls, and 11+ boys. Attach a slip of paper to each bag to indicate what is inside.
4. Safely store the bags at the Department of Social Services for social workers to distribute when they see fit. Have a sign-out sheet so you can see what backpacks have been distributed. In our experience, the infant backpacks have been heavily used, and we recently replenished them.
5. Look for upgrades to the process, for example, adding suitcases for older children. Speak with contacts at the Department of Social Services to see if the children need other items.

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## **Supplies List**

### **Birth - 3**

**Blanket or Stuffed Toy  
Diapers  
Wipes  
Board Book  
Baby shampoo  
Bottle or sippy cup  
Laundry bag**

### **4 – 10 (We try to tailor the items to a boy or girl depending on what we have.)**

**Stuffed animal or blanket or toy  
Laundry bag  
Body wash/shampoo  
Coloring book and crayons  
Pens/pencils  
Toothpaste/Toothbrush**

### **11+ (We try to tailor the items to a boy or girl depending on what we have.)**

**Blanket  
Shower Caddy  
Laundry bag  
Body wash/shampoo  
Notebook or adult coloring book  
Pens/colored pencils/markers  
Toothpaste/Toothbrush  
Deodorant  
Hair brush/comb**

**\*Miscellaneous items are put in an age appropriate bag.**