

May 2021 – Newsletter

The mission of Back 2 School Illinois is to create and support educational opportunities that enrich the lives of Illinois children.



Every \$19 donation allows us to provide one more underserved child with their own Back 2 School supplies kit.

Donate Today !

We Appreciate Teachers Contest Launched

Nominate your favorite teacher
for their extraordinary work



Teachers always have a challenging job and we understand how much more difficult it is during this time of COVID. To say thank you for all their hard work, we once again are launching our We Appreciate Teachers contest.

From all the entries, 10 teachers will be selected as winners. Each will receive a Back 2

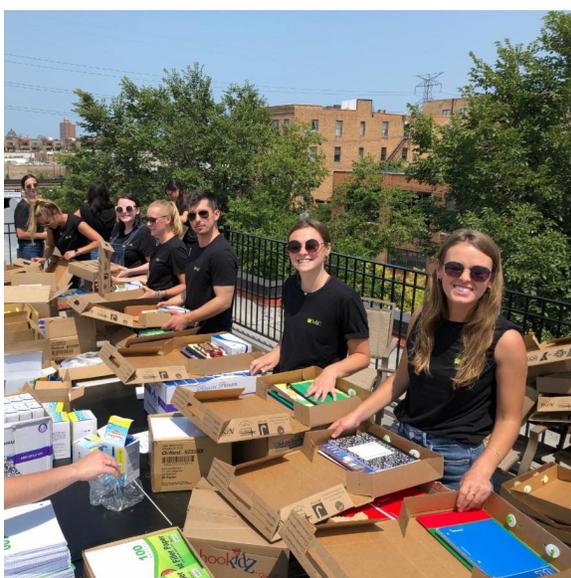
School Illinois gift package including a large basket full of goodies from Trader Joe's, Cabot Creamery, Lynfn Winery, Starbucks Coffee, and more. They will also be treated to a luxurious evening of champagne and hors d'oeuvres as well as a salon treatment from award-winning [Dennis Bartolomei](#) hair salon. Plus, each teacher will also receive 30 Back 2 School kits for their classroom.

Applications are available on the B2SI website. Anyone can submit an application on behalf of a teacher, including the teacher him/herself. The teacher must be currently employed by a school in Illinois to be considered as a contestant.

Application and Information to Nominate a Teacher

Build-A-Kits are Back and Now We Have Two Options

Make a 6-pack with our newest Build-A-Kit option



That's right... There are now more ways than one to complete a Build-A-Kit and help a kid in need. Read on for our update.

ONE: For some of you, your office is opening up. You and a group of your colleagues would like to come together, assemble kits and write "Notes of Inspiration." It's a great team-building activity that is both fun and rewarding. Our Build-A-Kit program is flexible too. You can hold one any time of year, not just during the traditional back-to-school season. Kids always need school supplies! You also get to pick where your kits go, whether it's to a school, government agency or community organization. And, if you need help finding a location to host your event, we can help with that too.

TWO: The second and newest option is our 6-pack Build-A-Kit program, which allows you to build kits right from home. We will send everything you need to assemble six school supply kits in one carton of materials directly to you or to your company office (for you to pick up). Then, once you are done building the kits, including writing a ["Note of Inspiration"](#) for each one, you will pack up the six kits in the same carton and drop them

off at your company's office. We will pick up all the cartons and deliver them. Not only will you be providing underprivileged kids with the tools they need to succeed, but you will be helping to boost their self-esteem by letting them know that someone out there is rooting for them.

Interested? Contact Matthew Kurtzman

Roberto Clemente Calculator Distribution Helping students calculate their success

With help from our Solve 4 Success partner, almost 100 Texas Instrument graphing calculators were donated to Roberto Clemente Community Academy high school in Chicago's Ukrainian Village neighborhood. The calculators, which cost in excess of \$130 each, were given to the math department to loan to students to help them with their ACT/SAT testing, a financial literacy unit, and general math classes.

There to greet us and receive the calculators were math teacher, Alexander Huerta, and the school's principal, Sergio Mojica. See what they had to say about this donation and how it impacted their students. It all adds up to better grades and better education. This is what Back 2 School Illinois is all about.



CLICK on Alexander's picture to hear what he has to say about receiving the calculators for his classroom.



CLICK on Sergio's picture to hear his Thankfulness about receiving the calculators for his school.

Waukegan School District Gets Gift of Kits Surprise for students a welcome lift during challenging times



CLICK on the picture above to view a video of the day.

The young students arrived on Wednesday, April 21, lined up outside the school doors one by one. Each filed into school and had their temperature checked, picked up their breakfast, and then received a surprise gift: one of our Back 2 School kits.

For those of you who have not been in a school recently, it is a sight to behold. What the teachers and administrators have done is nothing short of amazing. The amount of hours spent planning and the transformation of spaces and routines is mind-boggling.

So many aspects of daily life for kids going to school have changed. From the moment they enter the building wearing a mask until they leave to go home, it's very different from their pre-pandemic days. Desks are spread far apart and have plastic shields on three sides. There are signs, signs, signs everywhere reminding the children to wash their hands, use hand sanitizer, stay at home if they aren't feeling well, not to hug, how to walk in the hallways, and the list goes on and on. In the classrooms, teachers are often working with students who are physically in the classroom while they are teaching via computer to students who are at home.

It is a real dichotomy. On one hand, it is tough to see kids having to go to school this way as a result of the pandemic. On the other hand, to see how everyone has pulled together and is making it work is inspiring, and shows our resilience.

The staff at Clark Elementary School near Chicago's South Austin neighborhood could not have been more welcoming and appreciative of the gift of kits. In fact, they presented our staff with a big, beautiful banner signed by the teachers and administrative staff to present to this group's donor Michael Leppen. We were also moved by the priceless looks on the students' faces when they received the kits.

We are so grateful to everyone at the school and to Mr. Leppen for his generosity, which allowed us to bring a ray of sunshine into the lives of everyone at Clark on this ordinary day.



The Gala is On for September 23

"Get your Gala on" like never before

After this past year's pandemic, our 10th-year anniversary celebration never materialized. We scheduled, rescheduled, and rescheduled again until we finally landed on September 23 of this year.. and it is going to be one exciting, fun celebration as we pull out all the stops.

Mark your calendars as this will be a celebration and a Gala you won't want to miss! There will be a cocktail reception, silent auction, wine pull, dinner buffet, live music, coffee and dessert bar, after-party, and open bar throughout the evening. The festivities will be emceed by Chicago's very own [Wayne Johnson](#), winner of the Today Show's "Domestic Diva" contest and who has been a contributor for NBC 5 Chicago, "Good Morning America," and "Windy City Live."

Keep your eyes open and ears to the ground – Tickets will go on sale soon.



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