Northern Michigan Chapter Basic Needs

Foster Care Backpacks Program

**Timing, duration, frequency of program**

Ongoing. Clothing/Supplies are provided as the stock level is used. We keep 4 bags for each age group. There are 5 different age ranges (total of 20 backpack for girls & 20 backpacks for boy).

**Fiscal Information**

Budgeted expense total for program last year: $1500

Value of in-kind donations (estimated total): Ear buds are donated from members who fly in premium seats. Best guess is $10.00 per earbud. Total of $80.00.

**Partnerships**

Department of Health & Human Services

What role does your partner(s) have in the program? DHSS distributes the backpacks to children being removed from their homes.

**Clients**

Number of children/families served your last fiscal year: 13

**Volunteers**

How many volunteers participate in this program (planning and working): 2 (plus 20 in the Blanket Program)

What roles do the volunteers have in this program? Shop for clothing and fleece material at local retailers. Assemble the backpacks from the list of items that DHSS has requested.

**Program Description**

Overall goal of this program: to provide basic needs to a child who is removed from their home for a variety of tragic reasons. Hopefully, having a backpack, new clothes, stuffed animal (younger child), handmade fleece blanket, book and toiletry kit the child achieves a sense of security in this difficult time in their life.

What service/materials do you provide to your clients? Items in the Backpack include:

Backpacks and toiletry kits, pajamas or jogging suit, socks, underwear, stuffed animal (age 1-6), book (all age groups), coloring book & colors (age 4-10), journal/pen (age 11-17), handmade fleece blanket (age specific patterns) made by Christ Child volunteers. Toiletry kits are ordered with feminine products for the older girls.

The Chair is alerted via an email from the DHSS Community Resource Coordinator on the number of backpacks that are needed to keep the inventory at 4 bags per age range. The chair and co-chair coordinate a time to meet at a local retailer to purchase the items on the needs list provided by DHSS. The Chair orders the backpacks and custom toiletry kits from Kits for Kidz website. The backpacks and toiletry kits are of high quality. Shipping costs are waived since we purchase over 375 Head Start Kits from this company for our Head Start Backpack Program each year. The Chair coordinates with the Blanket Brigade Chair to ensure that there are enough blankets for the Foster Kit Program each year. Assembly of the backpacks is often times done at the DHSS location. DHSS has an area where the backpacks are stored. The Chair asks the Community Resource Coordinator to communicate with the Field Case Managers if there are items to be added or removed from the backpacks on a yearly basis.

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