**Kicks for Kids
GFWC North Pinellas Woman’s Club and GFWC Pinellas Juniorettes**

Project Overview

Kicks for Kids is a joint project between GFWC North Pinellas Woman’s Club and GFWC Pinellas Juniorettes.

Kicks for Kids wants to help create a community in which every school-aged child has a new pair of shoes and socks, thereby allowing them to attend school with the confidence and self-esteem needed to achieve success. This project promotes academic success for low-income children by leveling the playing field.

Project Rationale

Pinellas County is home to some of the most vulnerable among us, including many families living below the poverty level. The poverty rate in Pinellas County is 13.7%, and there are low-income communities in Pinellas County where the poverty rate is as high as 32%. Children are a critical part of this vulnerable population. Their families are struggling to provide the basic necessities, and many of these children are very worried about going to school in shoes that don’t fit, or make them feel like they don’t fit in. They will hesitate to raise their hands in the classroom because it will call attention to their clothing and shoes. It’s tough to learn when your shoes make you feel uncomfortable. Without proper footwear, children can suffer emotionally, physically and academically.

The purpose of our project is to support these at-risk school-aged children, offering them free new shoes and socks to increase their self-confidence, allow them to concentrate on schoolwork, and thus increase their chances of academic success.

In our project, over 200 pairs of new shoes and socks will be hand selected and placed in five locations across Pinellas County where low-income children can come to receive their free shoes and socks.

Project Plan

During 2020, the volunteers from GFWC North Pinellas Woman’s Club and GFWC Pinellas Juniorettes will work with five community partners that provide support services to low-income communities. Together we will offer a personal and dignified shopping experience for each child, rather than one where children have to accept hand-me-downs that may not fit just because they are free. Proposed community partner sites include Clothes to Kids, who provides free clothing to low-income, school-aged children; Raising Hope, a foster family support organization for foster parents who need assistance; High Point Neighborhood Family Center, a low-income community support services site, RCS Grace House, a homeless shelter for families in transition and Sheriff’s Youth Ranch, a group foster home for sibling groups.

This project engages volunteers from two GFWC clubs, 4 partners organizations and 40+ volunteers of all ages to come together to promote academic success for low-income children in Pinellas County. Club members will engage in selecting, ordering, and delivering the shoes to our partner facilities. Once delivered, shoe distribution events will be scheduled where club members can meet the recipients.

Anticipated Outcome

The anticipated project outcome is that vulnerable children will receive free shoes and socks which will enable them to increase their self-confidence, allow them to concentrate on schoolwork, and thus increase their chances of academic success. Education unlocks the door of freedom and allows children to break the cycle of poverty. By promoting their academic success in this manner, we can help open that door.