



## KIDS COMMUNITY CLOSET 2008-2009 FACT SHEET

- SPONSOR:** National Council of Jewish Women - St. Louis Section
- GOAL:** Providing elementary school children lacking basic essentials such as coats, clothing, school supplies or personal care products with the items they need to stay in school, increase daily attendance and help further their education.
- THE PROJECT:** The Kids Community Closet is an outgrowth of NCJW's very successful Back-to-School! Store™, now into its ninth year of operation. The Back-to-School! Store™, an annual event, offers a one-day shopping experience for underserved, pre-qualified elementary school students. With the assistance of a personal shopper, the children shop for free at Central Reform Congregation, where they select brand-new clothing, coats, shoes, books, school supplies and personal care items, all arranged and displayed as a store. The capacity of the BTSS, for this one-day event, has "peaked" at 950 children. The idea for the Kids Community Closet is that it can serve as an *extension* of the Back-to-School! Store™, by delivering brand-new clothing, coats, school supplies, etc. directly to pre-qualified children right at their schools. This allows NCJW to serve hundreds, and potentially thousands more students each year. We can meet their evolving needs as the seasons change and as they grow. We can respond to emergency situations. And we can reach those children who do not have access to the BTSS because they are not associated with one of the agencies or churches that are served there. And, as the teachers tell us, this project helps keep the kids in school and increase daily attendance!
- WHO BENEFITS:** In the pilot project, over 300 children at Central Elementary in the Wellston School District and the Pre-K and Kindergarten building can benefit from the closets—one in each location. We have added Central Elementary in the Ferguson Florissant School District this year, expanding our reach to another 300 children.
- EACH CHILD RECEIVES:** As determined by a teacher, administrator or social worker, children receive as needed coats, sweatpants, sweatshirts, backpacks, personal care items, socks, underwear and/or shoes and school supplies.
- HOW IT WORKS:** The idea for this program is to specifically serve those children who are recognized by teachers, social workers, principals, etc. to be in need of specific clothing and other supplies on any given day. Parents of the children at participating schools are aware that a **Kids Community Closet** now exists and if their child comes home one day with a new item of clothing, school supplies or a backpack, it has been provided to meet a recognized need that day. Along with the new item, the child will bring home a note stating that it was obtained from the **Kids Community Closet** at school.
- ESTIMATED COST:** The annual cost of the project is estimated to be \$35,000, to build and stock the closets, coordinate the volunteers, serve the needs of the children and provide staff support.
- FUNDING SOURCES:** The **Kids Community Closet** is a project of the National Council of Jewish Women - St. Louis Section. NCJW - St. Louis will provide volunteers and seek cash gifts, merchandise, in-kind donations and support from local companies, foundations, synagogues and churches, service groups and individuals.

*The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) is a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into action. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children, and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms.*



National Council of Jewish Women  
St. Louis Section