

Delawareans Urged to Donate School Supplies, Gift Cards to DHSS' Adopt-A-Student program by Aug. 4

NEW CASTLE (July 27, 2017) – As you prepare for the upcoming school year, add Delaware's children in need to your Back-to-School shopping lists by participating in the annual Adopt-A-Student program.

In Delaware, the Human Services Council, Inc., in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Services, is seeking individuals, businesses and organizations to help provide much needed backpacks, school supplies, and gift cards to support families who cannot afford to purchase uniforms, for thousands of the state's children living in poverty or in low-income households.

"It's critically important that Delaware's kids are prepared to learn on the first day of school – and we can all help make sure that's the case," said Governor John Carney. "The Adopt-A-Student program through the Department of Health and Social Services offers children from low-income households the opportunity to get school supplies and uniforms they will need to be ready for that first day. I urge Delawareans to donate to Adopt-A-Student so our students can take that next step toward success."

Designed to encourage a positive attitude toward school by helping with the supplies students need to achieve success, Adopt-A-Student accepts backpacks and school supply donations, as well as \$50 gift cards to retail stores that carry school uniforms such as Forman Mills, Kmart, Rainbow and Walmart.

"Our goal is to take away some of the stress parents and low-

income families encounter when they prepare children for a successful school year,” said Lisa MB Johnson, Program Administrator for the Adopt-A-Family program in the Division of State Service Centers. “We want children to focus on their educational experience and not whether or not they have the tools to manage during the day.”

In 2015, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 12 percent of Delawareans lived below the poverty line.

To “adopt” a student or make a donation, please contact the closest Adopt-A-Family office:

- New Castle County: Contact the Adopt-A-Student program at 302-792-6510 or email sharon.brown@delaware.gov. Donation hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

- Kent and Sussex counties: Contact the Adopt-A-Student program at 302-424-7260 or email elizabeth.senato@delaware.gov. Donation hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Any donor who needs to drop-off outside of these hours may call either office for an accommodation. More information can be found at www.adoptafamilydelaware.org.

In 2016, the Adopt-A-Student program, through the leadership of the Human Services Councils, Inc., helped more than 1,000 Delaware students. Year-round, the various Adopt-A-Family programs aid families in crisis – those struggling with illness, homelessness, domestic violence, poverty or unemployment. The program, begun in 1973, is coordinated by the Division of State Service Centers in all three counties.

For these programs, Adopt-A-Family accepts financial and in-kind donations. All donations are tax deductible. Checks can be made payable to: Adopt-A-Family, and mailed to either 3301 Green St., Claymont, DE 19703; or 13 SW Front St., Milford, DE 19963.

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Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving

the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations.