



NEWS

Northern New Jersey Business Volunteer Council

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The BVC—A Group of Companies That Care

North Jersey: Being successful in business is about more than doing well. It's also about doing good.

Since 2000, the more than 30,000 employee volunteers of the 30 member companies of the Northern New Jersey Business Volunteer Council (BVC) have been working year-round to help children and families with some very big issues like hunger, literacy, education and well-being.

In the past 8 years, the BVC members have generated and distributed almost a million dollars in resources through several initiatives focusing on impacting the lives of low-income children and families.

Through the **Books in a Bag** program, more than 3,330 new books were distributed this year to 670 children to encourage a love of reading. Employee volunteers collect, sort, bag and deliver the books to children in Head Start programs and other childcare centers. Many employees also volunteer to spend time reading to the children. Over the past eight years, volunteers have collected and distributed over \$214,000 in books for children.

Children who are removed from their homes and placed in foster care often must leave all their own "stuff" behind. Through BVC's **Just My Bag** initiative, employee volunteers collect personal care items, socks and underwear and gifts, and pack them in backpacks. More than 3,000 bags have been distributed to foster children through Youth Consultation Services, which contracts with the state to provide foster care services.

Every August the BVC coordinates **Tools for School**, a back to school supply drive, benefiting children whose families' resources don't stretch far enough to provide basic school supplies. To date over \$285,000 worth of school gear has been distributed, from backpacks to binders, composition books to calculators. 2008 has proven to be another successful year for this initiative--13 participating companies collected almost \$40 thousand worth of school supplies, which were distributed to children across New Jersey.

To combat summer shortages at area food pantries, employee volunteers organize **Brown Bag Buddies**, a collection of cash and nutritious, kid-friendly foods, which is distributed through Center for Food Action and other organizations serving low-income families who rely on school meal programs. Over \$200,000 worth of food and grocery store gift certificates has been distributed to date.

This past October, 64 volunteers from 8 companies participated in the Fairmount Playground Project, and helped build a playground from the ground up for children in Hackensack. BVC members who were represented were: BD in Franklin Lakes; Spectra Labs in Rockleigh, Hackensack companies Amper Cares and Cole, Schotz, Meisel, Forman and Leonard; Hudson City Savings Bank in Emerson, and PSE&G, headquartered in Newark.

The mission of the BVC is to provide leadership in meeting community needs, especially those of children and families, by mobilizing employee volunteers. The BVC is co-sponsored by the Volunteer Center of Bergen County and Bergen County's United Way. New members are currently being accepted – for more information, contact Tess Tomasi at ttomasi@bergenvolunteers.org or 201-489-9454 x114.

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CAPTION:

The Northern New Jersey Business Volunteer Council provides leadership in meeting community needs, especially those of children and families, by mobilizing employee volunteers. Shown are members participating in a playground building project, one of several initiatives they perform throughout the year. To join the BVC, call (201) 489-9454 Ext. 114