



**EMPOWERING CHILDREN,
BUILDING FUTURES
WWW.KIDS4KIDS.ORG
KIDS 4 KIDS
IS A 501C3 NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION**



About Kids 4 Kids and How It All Started...

Beth Rosenthal Davis started her teaching career in 1989 where she taught grades 2-5 and was decorated elementary science teacher winning many awards for her innovation in education and leadership. Davis is the author of 4 books, has been a teacher trainer and workshop presenter and has consulted for the Florida Department of Education. This year she celebrates 35 years instilling kindness as an educator in her community.

In 1996, Davis won a \$12,000 grant in a national grant competition for teachers sponsored by Northern Life Insurance called Education's Unsung Heroes. Davis used the \$12,000 prize to support her school club Kids 4 Kids (www.kids4kids.org) and established the charity. The goal of Kids 4 Kids is to teach children that they can change the world through their acts of kindness and for kids to help other kids in need. The "Club" turned charity started in the elementary school where she was teaching at the time. Each week hundreds of kind in her KIDS 4 KIDS CLUB met to do projects to change the world through their acts of kindness.

Davis believes that you are Never Too Small to Make A Big Difference...This is also the title of her book available FREE for download for parents, grandparents, and educators on the charity website. Her charity Kids 4 Kids has carried out dozens of community service projects with the help of the preschool and elementary age volunteers. The annual Kids 4 Kids Backpack Campaign has delivered over 95,000 backpacks filled with school supplies for kids in foster care, migrant families, homeless shelters and group homes since its inception in 1996.

In 2005, Davis left the comforts of her classroom to open Kids For Kids Academy, a nationally accredited early learning center. The goal...To teach preschoolers and elementary kids that they can change the world through their acts of kindness. Other notable Kids 4 Kids projects have included

- Raising \$140,000 for children attending Kids For Kids Academy who were stricken with cancer.
- Filling over 5,000 bags of candy (200 filled each year!) so homeless kids at Chapman Partnership can enjoy the simple pleasure of a bag of candy at Halloween time despite being homeless.
- Collection of costumes for homeless kids at Halloween Time in collaboration with CBS 4 Neighbors 4 Neighbors Operation Candy Corn.
- Annual toy drives to provide holiday gift to children who might otherwise go without.
- Annual Publix gift card drives to help families in need shop for their own special Thanksgiving dinner
- Donating over 80,000 books as part of their literacy initiative and Book Bundles drawstring bags for kids in dependency courts.
- Sending several containers of roofing supplies, butane stoves and food and whiteboards for schools devastated by Hurricane Dorian.
- Raising money to send foster kids on fieldtrips and buying summer snacks for group homes serving foster kids.

Their latest initiative is having the community take a pledge to be kind and in doing so send foster kids on fieldtrips to make lasting memories that children with parents' experience. Kids 4 Kids is selling kindness bracelets. Each \$2 bracelet comes with a kindness card. The community is encouraged to wear and share the bracelets and LOOK FOR SOMEONE BEING KIND and thank them with a Kindness Card.

Through this initiative, Davis hopes to spread the message...***In a world where you can be anything, BE KIND.*** Donations can be made Bracelets and Kindness Cards can be ordered on line at www.kids4kids.org . Businesses invited to spread kindness by purchasing bracelets and cards for their employees or customers and inviting the community to **TAKE THE KINDNESS PLEDGE!**

Educators can learn how to use the Kindness 101 Curriculum (Using On The Road with CBS Steve Hartman You Tube Videos) in their classes and download a corresponding kindness journal at the Kindness 101 for Teachers link on the charity website.

Our Current Project: Take The Kindness Pledge

Be a part of something special.

Purchase a “Kindness Matters” bracelet and pledge to spread kindness every day.

Why Kindness Matters:

- **Make a Difference:** 100% of bracelet proceeds benefit The Haven for Children and other Foster Care Agencies in Florida.
- **Inspire Others:** Wear your bracelet as a symbol of your commitment to kindness and inspire those around you.
- **Raise Awareness:** Encourage clubs, scout groups, temples, churches, and school groups to sell bracelets. Email teachkidskindness@gmail.com for group sales.
- **Support a Cause:** Help us reach our fundraising goal to enable foster kids to make memories as they grow by going on fieldtrips to local zoos, museums, movies, bowling, sports events, and theme parks for a trip of a lifetime!



TAKE THE KINDNESS PLEDGE

Purchase, sell, and wear Kindness Bracelets...

PLEDGE TO BE KIND EVERY DAY!

Spreading Kindness Is As Easy As 1, 2, 3...

STEP 1: GRAB A BAG... EACH BAG HAS 5 KINDNESS CARDS & 5 BRACELETS

STEP 2: SCAN ONE OF THE QR CODES BELOW TO MAKE YOUR \$10 DONATION.

STEP 3: IMAGINE THE SMILES ON FOSTER KIDS FACES WHEN THEY GO SOMEPLACE SPECIAL LIKE THE ZOO OR THE MOVIES!



Scan to see how you can help



Scan to pay \$teachkidskindness



KIDS 4 KIDS, INC.
teachkidskindness@gmail.com



Zelle



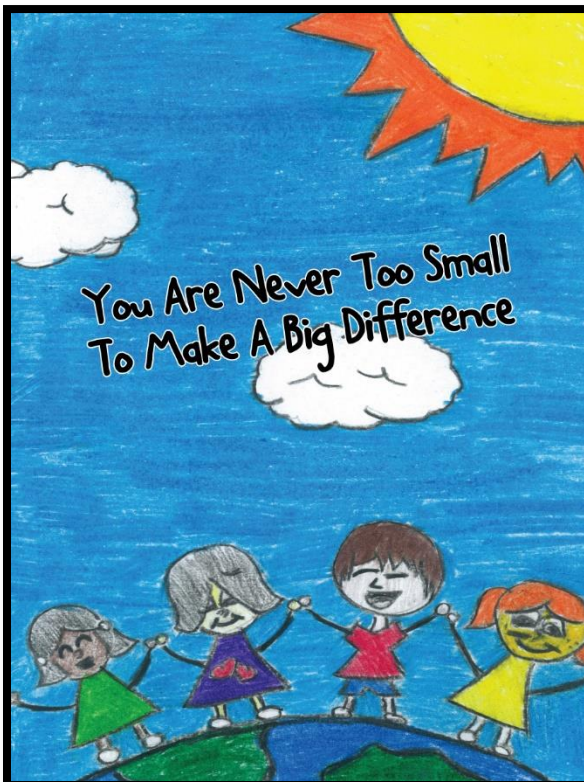
PayPal



Bracelets are only \$2 each. 100% of bracelet sales benefit our **FIELDTRIPS FOR FOSTER CARE Initiative** for Florida foster care agencies including



Each \$2 bracelet purchase comes with a FREE Kindness Card



You just performed a random act of kindness. I noticed and want to thank you for helping make our community and our world a better place.

Please enjoy the artwork on the other side, created by a child, and pass this card along to someone you see performing a random act of kindness.

Usted realizó un acto de bondad. Noté y quiero agradecerle por ayudar a hacer nuestra comunidad y nuestro mundo un lugar mejor.

Por favor disfrute ilustraciones al reverso, creado por un niño, y pase esta tarjeta a alguien que usted vea realizar un acto de bondad.



www.kids4kids.org | www.teachkidskindness.com



These beautiful hands belong to some of the foster kids living at The Haven For Children. They will be some of the recipients of funds raised through the Kindness Bracelet Initiative. With your help we can send them on field trips to create lifetime memories.



These are some of the youth volunteers working on the Kindness Bracelet Project



Don't be left out...Design your level of participation!

As part of this initiative, Davis is giving away FREE digital copies of her Book on the kids4kids.org website.

You Are Never Too Small To Make A Big Difference. Impacting A Community With Kindness

A Guide For Teachers and Parents



Kindness Bracelet Sponsorship Opportunities:

Platinum Sponsorship \$25,000

Includes:

12,000 Kindness Bracelets with the sponsor Logo and Website on the inside of the bracelet

12,000 Kindness Cards with the sponsor logo printed on the back of each card

Sponsor Logo listed on the Kids 4 Kids Website

Gold Sponsorship \$20,000

Includes:

10,000 Kindness Bracelets

10,000 Kindness Cards with the sponsor Logo printed on the back of each card

Sponsor Logo listed on the Kids 4 Kids Website

Silver Sponsorship \$10,000

5,000 Kindness Bracelets

5,000 Kindness Cars with the sponsor Logo printed on the back of each card

Sponsor Logo listed on the Kids 4 Kids Website

Bronze Sponsorship \$5,000

2,500 Kindness Bracelets

2,500 Kindness Cars with the sponsor Logo printed on the back of each card

Sponsor Logo listed on the Kids 4 Kids Website

Kindness 101 for Teachers



Kindness 101 with Steve Hartman
CBS Mornings - Playlist

On the kids4kids.org website, educators can learn how to infuse Kindness lessons into their daily curriculum. The website directs teachers to 40 Steve Hartman Kindness 101 videos from his YouTube playlist to be used as part of a class morning routine. Each video is only 5-6 minutes long. Teachers can also download a FREE daily writing journal that is correlated with the playlist

FREE Kindness Journal



After the video, classes can discuss the definition of each kindness concept. The definitions are found in the journal.

The journal pages follow the order of the Kindness 101 playlist, making it easy to track student progress and reflection.

Throughout the week, students have a chance to write about the segment in the journal and draw pictures. If you do not wish to copy the journal, teachers can make one for themselves and write the Kindness concept with the definition of the word on the board, and students can transfer it to a dedicated Kindness Journal composition book.

As a class or a kindness club, students can participate in activities such as:

- Bringing in candy and filling bags for homeless kids for Halloween.
- Making get-well cards for kids in local hospitals.
- Filling shoeboxes with Dollar store snacks and toiletries to be sent to soldiers serving our country.
- Making Valentine cards for senior citizens or foster kids.
- Bringing in new toys for local holiday toy drives.
- Designing kindness cards. (see sample in the bracelet project)
- Holding a food drive or grocery gift card drive to provide meals for needy families.
- Making crafts or rubber band bracelets and selling them for a cause that is near and dear to your class.
- Collecting school supplies for kids in need.
- Collecting needed items after a disaster.

Remember: Kindness is contagious! By incorporating kindness into your classroom, you are helping to create a more compassionate and empathetic generation of students.

Some of our other projects:

SUPPORTING SICK CHILDREN

Kids 4 Kids also raises money to assist families whose children have been diagnosed with illnesses. 100% of all donations earmarked for children battling illnesses are given to families during this difficult time. Funds are given to families to assist with medical bills and loss of income when families have to miss work to take care of a sick child. To date, \$140,000 has been raised and donated.

KINDNESS 101 FUNDRAISING

Elementary school students learned about kindness through a year-long "Kindness 101" curriculum. They raised \$769.55 by making and selling rubber band bracelets and collecting donated items. The funds were used to purchase gift cards for foster children at the Haven For Children, as well as to provide a homeless man with \$30 in gift cards. The remaining money will be used to provide meals and snacks for the children at the Haven For Children.

BOOK RECYCLING & DISTRIBUTION

Kids 4 Kids Book Recycling and Distribution program encourages kids and members of the community to donate used and new books for children who could not afford books of their own. Kids 4 Kids has collected and distributed thousands of books over the years.

HURRICANE RELIEF EFFORTS

After Hurricane Dorian, Kids 4 Kids in collaboration with families from Kids For Kids Academy, Miami Dade County Schools, Neighbors 4 Neighbors, South Florida Roofers, and Catering the Event we helped families in Grand Bahama. Our Community raised money and also donated 9 containers filled with school furniture, whiteboards, roofing materials, and boxes of food for families during their time of crisis. The value of the donation was over \$250,000

OTHER PROJECTS

Kids 4 Kids organizes activities throughout the year to engage children in helping others. During Halloween, they decorate and fill 200 treat bags and collect costumes for kids living in homeless shelter so homeless kids and enjoy the simple pleasure of a bag of candy despite their homelessness. They design cards for children in hospitals. They also collect gift cards for Thanksgiving and the December holidays to provide support to families in need.

READ ABOUT OUR PAST

Our commitment to serving our community is longstanding!

Go to www.kids4kids.org to watch an inspiring 5 minute video commemorating the delivery of our 75,000th backpack!

THE POWER OF YOU



"IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO BE COMPASSIONATE, WE MUST ACT."- DHALI LAMA

It all begins with a little bit of hope. We spend countless minutes a day clicking on people's Facebook pages and "liking" their messages of hope and inspiration. We listen to stories of determination and smile at the outcomes. But what are we doing to be a part of these great accomplishments? It has crossed all of our minds about the impact we can make on our community. How can we teach our children the importance of empathy? Simply, it begins with us. It begins with the thought that even the smallest gesture can change a person's life; that one hour of your day a month will create a memory for a lifetime.

Imagine your child's excitement that first day of school: the smell of new crayons, the sound of children ripping open the plastic to their new Duo-Tangs, the excitement of having that cool new backpack filled with hope for a new great year. Now, imagine your child not having that – not because you were too lazy to get supplies for them, but because you couldn't afford it. Imagine your child entering a new classroom with a backpack that is all torn up and supplies that are second hand. Imagine the teacher asks them to take out their red folder listed on their supply list, but they don't have it.

Kids 4 Kids has been providing new supply filled backpacks since 1996. Beth Davis, the Director of Kids For Kids academy, founded this group. An amazing feat, this organization has handed out 75,000 backpacks and 90,000 new books since their inception. It truly is a outstanding way to involve yourself and your children in an activity to help others. This organization gathers in various locations

in August to deliver these backpacks. This isn't just a free for all – this is a group of volunteers taking each individual child by the hand and helping them select what they will receive. Giving each child the special attention they deserve.

We can all be a part of this organization – whether we send a check, buy supplies, or participate in the event. It is an incredible way to show our children the importance of giving back to society. Most of us are blessed to be able to have the means to purchase these simple items for our families; but for those who can't, let us pull together and give back to our community, to our future. These are our leaders of tomorrow and how remarkable will it feel to know that you contributed to the success of our future generation.



Newspaper Articles Published 1997-2012

SOUTH MIAMI-DADE: Former South Miami-Dade teacher gives students tools for school

Miami Herald, June 7, 2009 LYNETTE ZILIO

A former South Dade teacher has filled more than 65,000 backpacks with school supplies, including one group she's worked with from kindergarten to 12th grade.

Beth Davis was not wealthy growing up, but she always had a 12-pack of Crayola Crayons on her first day of school. While nursing her 2-month-old daughter one night in 1996, Davis thought about how her baby girl would have everything for her first day of school, while so many other children would not. A teacher at Jack Gordon Elementary in Country Walk at the time, her late-night inspiration led her to create Kids 4 Kids, a nonprofit organization to help underprivileged children. She started the Fill-a-Backpack campaign that made sure children from kindergarten to 12th grade had school supplies on the first day of school. Last week, Davis' hard work paid a special dividend. Her first group -- children of migrant families in South Miami-Dade -- graduated from high school, 12 years after receiving their first backpack from Kids 4 Kids. The organization has filled their backpacks ever since. "I never thought we'd be here 13 years later to see you graduating," said Davis, addressing the 110 graduates. Davis has since left teaching and owns a preschool, Kids For Kids Academy, in Country Walk. The



Mexican-American Council honored Davis at the 25th Annual Migrant Students Recognition banquet at Signature Gardens in West Kendall. The Migrant Education Program, run through the public schools, provides after-school tutoring and college scholarship assistance.

Diana Anez, 18, a senior at South Dade Senior High, will attend Miami Dade College to study early childhood development. To this day, she remembers her excitement after receiving a backpack. "It made me feel like I was important," she said. Israel Garcia, 18, a senior from Homestead High, was honored in: "students with a GPA of 3.00 and higher"

and "students with a GPA of 4.00 and higher." A future student at Le Cordon Bleu of Culinary Arts Miami, Garcia remembers when he and his family lived near the Everglades, and he was given a backpack filled with school supplies. "It let me know there's people out there who care about education and people succeeding and making the world a better place," he said.

Garcia's parents, Daniel and Eva, couldn't be more appreciative. "We thank God for people who concern themselves with immigrants," said Eva Olvera.

Since Davis founded the organization in 1996, Kids 4 Kids has delivered 65,000 backpacks filled with school supplies and 90,000 new books. Most of the supplies and books have gone to children of migrant workers, along with children in foster homes, abused homes and those from low-income families in South Florida.

"It's a bittersweet celebration," Davis said. "Twelve years ago, we were the only ones in town, but there's been a lot of duplication of services."

This school year, the organization will reduce the number of donated backpacks to 600. Instead, Kids 4 Kids will focus on 600 of the least underserved high school students from the migrant community. The change is the result of pinched costs -- it costs \$80,000 to fund the program annually from donors and grants. "Our biggest obstacle is money," Davis said. "Finding sufficient funding is hard."

KIDS RECEIVE KEY SUPPLIES FOR SCHOOL Miami Herald, August 9, 2007 Section: Neighbors
Page: 3SD ILEANA MORALES

First-grader Araiza Aviles wore a pink dress, so of course she picked out a matching pink bag at Saturday's annual backpack giveaway at two South Miami-Dade migrant camps. Araiza attends Redland Elementary with cousin Vanessa Aviles, who grabbed her hand and said, "Let's go show off our backpacks."

The girls were among about 500 children who got the backpacks -- stuffed with new school supplies -- at the Redland and South Dade housing centers. The gifts came courtesy of the Kids 4 Kids Fill-a-Backpack Campaign, which in recent weeks gave away 6,000 backpacks filled with notebooks, pens, pencils and paper. The program began 10 years ago to make the lives of kids in foster homes, shelters and migrant camps a little brighter. This year, Farm Share donated \$30,000 to help the program meet its \$75,000 budget. Kids 4 Kids, a nonprofit organization, depends on volunteers who range from age 10 to senior citizens. Some of them helped give away children's books, too. "I felt good," said Lillian May Dawes, a junior at Sunset High who helped kids pick out their favorites, including Nancy Drew and Harry Potter. "I like to see the smiles on kids' faces. They're shy at first, but then they open up and they are fun to hang out with." On Saturday, Farm Share also donated tomatoes and avocados to the migrant worker families.

Volunteers from Kids 4 Kids held up umbrellas to block the heat as people waited in line. "We have 65 volunteers," said Beth Davis, founder of Kids 4 Kids, at the Redland camp. "Each child gets their own volunteer to take them shopping. It's for crowd control and so they can get a sense of back-to-school shopping." The program also ensures that the children don't face ridicule for showing up at school without the proper supplies, she said. Even after receiving their backpacks, the children lingered on a basketball court to review their new gifts. "I'm excited and ready for school," said Ismael Bonilla, 10, a fifth-grader at South Dade Elementary. "I like recess and spelling."

KIDS GET PACKS -- AND SUPPLIES YAHNILET COLON Miami Herald August 5, 2007 Section: Neighbors Page: 3WK

They are almost kids themselves, up early on a summer vacation morning to sort backpacks and load boxes to distribute to low-income schools, homeless shelters and community agencies. It's worth it "helping out the kids and knowing that they're going to be happy," said Daniel Guzman, 17, of Kendall. Guzman is a volunteer with Kids 4 Kids, an organization founded by Kendall resident and former school teacher Beth Davis 10 years ago. The group's most popular venture is the annual Backpack Project, in which backpacks -- 6,000 this year -- are filled with school supplies and handed out to children in needy areas of Miami-Dade and Broward counties. The group also provides fiction books for the children, ranging in reading levels from elementary through adolescent, including books in Spanish.

Davis, a school teacher for 17 years and mother of two, said she remembers the excitement of the first day for many children and how those who couldn't come prepared would shrink in their seats. Having their supplies puts them on a more even playing field, she said. It shows them "somebody values you and you're worth the investment," said Davis,

40.

Davis, who now owns and runs Kids For Kids Academy in West Kendall, continues to do volunteer teaching at Jack D. Gordon Elementary, where every summer volunteers meet up to sort, pack and distribute loads of backpacks.

Most of the volunteers are teenagers. Phillip Guzman, 15, and his brother, Daniel, have volunteered for more than five years. He said he enjoys "taking the backpacks to the migrant camp. They're happy; they say thank you." Stephanie Ferrare and her friend Alina Gomez, both 15, said they feel like they're helping people directly. "We could do it together, and it was something worth doing," Gomez said.

The backpacks they fill range from Brats to Barbie and Superman designs. Inside are pencils, folders and notebook paper among other supplies typically on back-to-school lists.

"We teach kids that through acts of kindness, they can change the world," Davis said. About 73 agencies, including Chapman and Florida City elementary schools and the South Dade and Redland Housing Centers, will receive backpacks this year, according to Davis. Kids 4 Kids sponsors include various school officials, Colonial Bank, Target and its partner this year, Farm Share.

Farm Share founder and chairwoman Patricia Robbins said the organization has worked with Kids 4 Kids for five years, providing tractor trailers of school supplies and snacks for distribution day.

After hearing the backpack project might not continue due to a lack of sponsorship, Robbins said Farm Share donated about \$30,000 to make the \$60,000 project possible this year. "We're hoping [others will also] step up to the plate," she said.

Now on its 10th anniversary, Kids 4 Kids was to end its weeklong project by delivering 500 backpacks to two migrant camps in Homestead this weekend. Volunteers act as personal shoppers walking with children to carts filled with a variety of backpack styles and a wide selection of books. In this way, the children will have their own back-to-school shopping experience.

HOW TO HELP For information about volunteering and making donations visit www.kids4kids.org.

Elementary students collected more than 8,000 books to donate to a grade school in Punta Gorda that was hit by Hurricane Charley.

BY LAURA MORALES Miami Herald October 24, 2004

Most of the students at Jack D. Gordon Elementary School in Country Walk hadn't been born when Hurricane Andrew hit in 1992. But their teachers and parents remember it all too well. When Beverley West, a 37-year physical education teacher, thinks of the havoc Andrew brought to her life, her eyes fill with tears.

"We found the tin roof of the place peeled back like the top of a sardine can. Everything was soaked," she said of a building at Pine Lake Elementary School in Perrine, where she worked at the time. Her house met the same fate. West and her fellow teachers managed to keep going, thanks to people who donated books, equipment and portable classrooms. On Thursday, she and the other staff and students at Jack D. Gordon showed their solidarity and returned that help.

Thursday marked the end of a two-week drive during which the children collected over 8,000 books to donate to the teachers and students of Deep Creek Elementary in Punta Gorda, which was pounded by Hurricane Charley in August. "Most of the teachers over there found their class book collections ruined," said Beth Davis, a science lab teacher and one of the drive's organizers. "This was a great way to give back to the community."

'Jack D. Gordon Elementary Principal Ruth A. Alperin was thrilled. "I'm very proud of how these kids and their parents rose to the occasion to help others in need," Alperin said. Two students from each class at Gordon gathered in the school courtyard, surrounding about 70 cartons of books. The boxes were decorated with pictures by members of Kids 4 Kids, a school-based club that sponsored the drive. The donated books included titles like Dr. Seuss' *The Foot Book*, *Just Grandma and Me* by Mercer Mayer and many from R.L. Stine's *Goosebumps* series. Each was inscribed with the name of the child who donated it.

The kids held up a banner that said: 'Jack Gordon Elementary Rockin' Readers Donate 8,000 Books to Deep Creek

Elementary in Punta Gorda." While Davis snapped pictures, the kids grinned and gave a thumbs up to the camera. The fifth-graders then loaded the boxes into an 18-wheeler provided by Farm Share, a local food recovery organization. Farm Share also donated a case of Boost energy drinks for each Deep Creek student and had the truck driven to Punta Gorda on Friday. Each teacher there will get about 200 grade-appropriate books to replace their lost libraries, and the students will each receive books they can take home. "Kids 4 Kids takes part in activities like donating backpacks of books and supplies to kids in migrant camps and writing cards and letters to our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq," said Dena Vermeulen, a Country Walk resident and PTA mom who has a fifth-grader at Gordon. "This is important because we get to help all those kids that lost their houses and their schools," said 10-year-old Vanessa Aycart. Ariel Foster, also 10, added: "It's great that they will know who it was that sent them the books."

Packing bags for needy kids, Campaign to benefit local students

BY ROMINA GARBER Miami Herald- Broward Edition August 09, 2003

About 6,000 disadvantaged children in Broward and Miami-Dade will start the school year with new backpacks and school supplies. Volunteers gathered Friday in a corporate lunchroom at Union Bank in Sunrise to stuff the new backpacks that will be distributed to homeless, abused and disadvantaged children in time for the first day of school Aug. 25. About 1,000 backpacks will be distributed in Broward and 5,000 in Miami-Dade. "We feel homeless children should be starting school with new stuff like other kids, not stuff that isn't up to standard," said Dianne Sepielli, coordinator of homeless education and character education for the Broward County schools and a board member of Kids 4 Kids, the nonprofit organization running the Fill-a-Backpack program. Volunteers stuffed each bag with four folders, a box of colored pencils, a notebook, a ruler, a pencil holder with pencils inside, a packet of lined paper and a composition book. The kids have a variety of backpack colors to choose from: blue, red, green and yellow for older children and Spiderman and Barbie packs for preschoolers. "The program helps with kids' self-esteem and certainly helps with their readiness to go back to school," Sepielli said. "They need to feel good about themselves going back because education is the way out of homelessness." The backpacks in Broward will be delivered today in a caravan of 10 to 15 cars, starting at Plymouth Colony, a transitional homeless shelter in Hollywood. Kids will be allowed to select the color and size of the bag they want, as well as reading books and snacks. Nicole Jones, of Union Bank's human resources department, said the bank is proud to be a sponsor of the campaign. Its workers volunteered in shifts to assist with packing the bags. "They give us their money and their time," Sepielli said. School Board members and public school teachers were among the other volunteers. "I went to a homeless shelter to volunteer and they gave me information about this event," said Melanie Greene, a teacher at Greynolds Park Elementary in North Miami Beach. "I know firsthand that they need these materials. It's nice that they won't be walking into school missing what other kids have." Katia Despeignes, community liaison for the School Board, brought her daughter, Nicole, 13, and her niece, Stephanie Hecdivert, 14, who was visiting from Haiti, to help out. "It's great that they're helping out the children in school," said Nicole, who attends Margate Middle School. "It makes children be prepared and have all their stuff."



A GIFT OF SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR NEEDY KIDS

By **SOFIA SANTANA** *Miami Herald Sunday, August 17, 2003* Section: Local Page: 3B

Whisper Watkins Jr. hasn't had a new backpack for the first day of school in years. Not only does the Centennial Middle sixth-grader have a new backpack, it came filled with folders, a box of colored pencils, notebooks, a ruler, pencils and school books. The back-to-school supplies came courtesy of Kids 4 Kids, which handed out more than 300 backpacks to underprivileged kids in South MiamiDade on Saturday morning. This summer, 6,000 of the backpacks have been given out throughout Miami-Dade and Broward counties, say members of the group, made up of teachers and students from Jack D. Gordon Elementary. "This feels good," said Whisper, trying on his new backpack. Whisper, his two brothers and sister, and his parents live at the Emergency Housing Center in



Florida City, where about 40 of the backpacks were handed out Saturday morning. "This helps a whole lot," said Tarsenda Bennet, who also lives at the emergency shelter with her son Franky Jean Francois, 5. "I'm about to move out of here and don't have the money to buy these things." Some of the Kids 4 Kids volunteers know what that's like. "At one point, my two older daughters and I were in transition," said Patty Weber, a teacher at Gordon Elementary. "You learn that there is always someone who has less than you, so I like to give back." Kids 4 Kids, which does other projects throughout the year, such as giving out bags filled with treats on Halloween and Valentine's Day, is the largest provider of free school supplies, according to the Miami-Dade public school system. Since 1997, when the group was formed, volunteers have given away 30,000 backpacks, 60,000 new books and 50,000 holiday toys, nearly all of which are distributed from the trunks of the cars owned by the volunteers. Each pupil gets a volunteer who helps the child pick out a book bag, books and supplies, explained Beth Davis, a teacher at Gordon Elementary who started Kids 4 Kids. "Then we wish them a nice school year."

Packing bags for needy kids, Campaign to benefit local students

Miami Herald- Broward Edition August 09, 2003 BY ROMINA GARBER

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Kids 4 Kids donates over 1,000 gifts for the families of needy children

United Teacher's Of Dade, December 2002

The Christmas spirit was in the air while Gilda Hinson's 5th grade Comet Lab students from Jack D. Gordon Elementary helped less fortunate kids from Floral Heights Elementary pick out a gift for everyone in their family. More than 1,000 gifts had been donated by Kids 4 Kids, a non-profit organization, and by Hinson's Comet Lab class. Each of her students brought a brand new toy for students at Floral Heights. "Children are so used to receiving, especially during Christmas time," Hinson said. "This event will allow them to experience the joy of giving and helping the less fortunate."

Beth Davis, founder of Kids 4 Kids, first came up with the concept of kids helping kids in 1996 when she began the FILL-A-Backpack Campaign. The goal was to have kids along with volunteers fill as many new backpacks with school supplies for homeless children living in shelters and attending public schools in Miami-Dade County. More than 26,000 backpacks have been filled since then. Kids 4 Kids began as a club with 40 members. Now, more than 200 kids belong, working on a variety of activities. Aside from the holiday shopping project, Kids 4 Kids also helps fill bags and baskets for homeless children at Halloween, Thanksgiving Valentine's Day. Most of the Floral Heights students come from poor neighborhoods, and for some the only Christmas present they will be giving their loved ones will be the ones distributed by Kids 4 Kids and Jack D. Gordon students. "I feel very good and excited that these kids are getting what they want," said Janelle Ventura, one of the student participants from Jack D. Gordon. "I am enjoying their excitement." Davis decided to have the holiday shopping project at Floral Heights simply because she loves the school and the people. "Helping others is a way of life for me. Sometimes, when I feel overwhelmed, I think of kids who are less fortunate and go on. I do it for them," she said. The students at Floral Heights were completely clueless to what they had in store for them. The teachers kept the holiday shopping activity on the down low in order to surprise the kids, and make them feel special and wanted. "I think that the generosity of Jack D. Gordon Elementary students and parents exemplify the holiday spirit no matter what religion they might represent," stated Eileen Wood Medina, Jack Gordon Assistant Principal. Said Floral Heights Principal Dr. Jean Teal: "Adrenaline is running through my veins. I am very excited and grateful for those who have made this activity possible."

KIDS 4 KIDS CLUB TEACHES CHILDREN A LESSON OF A LIFETIME

BY DONNA GEHRKE-WHITE The Miami Herald November 15, 2001 Page: 42GI

Memo: GIVING IN THE SHADOW OF GRIEF

Ask Dylan Carper, 9, why he gives to the needy and he tells you right away: "Because my grandpa and my mom had cancer and I just know how it feels with other kids." "I feel really bad for the people who are poor," adds his friend, Devin Carter, 9. The two are fourth-graders at Jack D. Gordon Elementary in south Miami-Dade - and budding philanthropists of tomorrow. THEY'RE LUCKY They count themselves lucky their school has a club to help others, Kids 4 Kids. Now in its fifth year, the club has about 200 students, from second to fifth grade. They meet early every other Wednesday to carry out charitable projects, from making Halloween goodie bags for homeless children to preparing to send buttons they made for the troops overseas. In December, the club will adopt 85 homeless families and hold a holiday bash for them. "Eighty-five families will meet 85 strangers and leave as friends," says the club's founder, Beth Davis, a science teacher at the school. She was ahead of her time: Now there is a movement to get kids started as early as possible in giving to others. It's a lesson that will last a lifetime, says Jack D. Gordon Elementary Principal María V. Pabellón, a big supporter of Kids 4 Kids. And it's a lesson that carries over to adults, rekindling their compassion, often buried by the busyness in today's lives. "Our children are teaching the adults who have forgotten to help others in need," Pabellón says. "It shouldn't take a tragedy to help your neighbor." STUFFED BACKPACKS The club's biggest event is raising money to buy backpacks stuffed with school supplies for thousands of children - many of whom have never had new crayons, says Davis, the club's founder. It's a project dear to her heart. Her grandfather, an immigrant, struggled. "He was six when his parents died [in Russia]," she

says. "He slept on their snowy graves, barefoot, because he had nowhere to go." Yet, ultimately he became a successful businessman in the United States, because of the kindness of others: An uncle gave him a boat ticket to America when his own son died. Once here, people helped him get started, buying china and other wares from his pushcart. He later opened his own lamp shade company. It's that kind of concern that can motivate children to rise above tough surroundings, she says. "If kids receiving our backpacks know what we are doing," she adds, "then they know someone cares." Last month, Davis was named to the Eckerd 100 Salute to Women for Community Volunteerism. She is also one of three state finalists for this school year's Presidential Award for Teaching Science, sponsored by the National Science Foundation. But one of her best rewards, she says, is seeing how students enjoy giving to others. Stephanie Richman, a third-grader, is one of those. Not only does she like to help people, but she likes to make the crafts that go to people in need. Her favorite: Drawing blue flowers on a postcard that was sent, with others, to rescue workers at the World Trade Center site. "It cheers them up. They will be happy and be glad that people care for them," she says. Monica Skoko, a fifth-grader who has been in the club since second grade, is grateful that she has already had years of helping others. "There's a lot of people who need help and it feels really good to help them."

KIDS GET HEAD START ON HELPING OUT OTHERS

The Miami Herald June 10, 2001 Section MICHAEL VASQUEZ,

The 250 members of Kids 4 Kids launched their 2001 Fill-A-Backpack campaign Monday. The goal: making sure every homeless or abused child in South Florida has the tools to learn. "I really want to fill lots of book bags," said Shawn Carper, 11, a member of the group. Inside each book bag that Shawn fills will be notebooks, pencils and other items a child might need. The group aims to have 4,000 book bags stuffed by August. They rely entirely on donations from caring individuals and businesses. Kids 4 Kids is the brainchild of Beth Davis, a science teacher at Jack D. Gordon who became troubled by the amount of underprivileged students who showed up on the first day of school unprepared. Often these kids would be ridiculed by classmates and be branded as homeless for the rest of the year. "Imagine being a high school student and having to bring your things to school in a Publix bag," Davis said. Convinced that with a helping hand these disheartened kids could succeed, Davis began the Fill-A-Backpack campaign in 1996. The experience of her grandfather served as a reminder of what a homeless person could become. Orphaned at age 6, he emigrated to the United States from Russia and survived on the streets of New York while working odd jobs. Through the kindness of strangers, he was able to get on his feet and went on to own his own business. "No matter how bad you have it, there are people out there who care," Davis said. What makes Kids 4 Kids special is that it is second- through fifth-graders who are doing the caring - and making a difference. "It makes me feel pretty good because I know I'm helping somebody in need," Timothy Carter, 11, said. Timothy is one of the group members who travels in a van from shelter to shelter passing out the book bags to homeless children. In the August heat the volunteers are often covered in sweat. Last year they were drenched by thunderstorms. But there's nothing quite like seeing 4,000 faces wear ear-to-ear smiles. "It's the first time they have something new that's theirs," Davis said. "They're going shopping and it's not costing them anything." The needy children get to pick out the backpack they want, and they also get to choose a new book to read - anything from Dr. Seuss to Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul. Most of the supplies go to homeless children, but a sizable portion are also distributed to abused or migrant children as well as kids living in area foster homes. If Kids 4 Kids meets this year's fundraising goal, every homeless public school student in Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties will start school with nothing to be ashamed of. "I just think it's wonderful that these kids here learning about community service at such an early age," said Virginia Tomlinson of American General-Valic, one of Kids 4 Kids signature sponsors. Lynne Cameron of WFOR-CBS 4 Neighbors 4 Neighbors, another signature sponsor, agreed: "These are the kids that will lead South Florida." They are learning to be leaders in their own homes as well. Sharon Carper has two sons who are members of Kids 4 Kids. Last year, when Carper battled against breast cancer, her 8-year-old son Dillon was a constant pillar of support. He made her gifts and did everything he could to cheer her up. "When they do things for others, it makes them feel good," Carper said of her boys. "And they're happy with that."

Grass Roots group gives school supplies to homeless children

THE MIAMI HERALD STUDENT HELPERS August 21, 2000 Local Page: 1B By JACK WHEAT,

Like most of her classmates, 5-year-old Latrail Hall will start kindergarten this month with a fresh new public school uniform and a pristine backpack stuffed with crayons, pencils, paper and other trimmings. "See?" Latrail said as she dug through her colorful, child-size backpack. "I've got pencils. I've got clothes." To her mother, that falls in the category of miracles. "She'll go in just like everybody else," Tiffanie Hall said. "I didn't have the money for any of this." The Halls live at the New Life Family Center at 3260 NW First Ave. Sunday, the homeless shelter received its annual visit from Kids 4 Kids, a bona fide grass-roots effort that, in four years, has blossomed into the leading provider of school supplies to homeless students in Miami-Dade County Public Schools. By the time school opens, the Kids 4 Kids Club at Jack D. Gordon Elementary and a handful of other schools will have delivered supplies to every homeless child in Miami-Dade and Broward counties who could be identified by social agencies - plus students from migrant families, in foster care and in programs for abused children. Kids 4 Kids is 250 second- through fifth-graders and their parents who answered the call of Beth Davis, a Gordon Elementary science teacher who decided in 1996 that she would no longer watch children's hopes for the future dwindle because they came to school as obviously poor kids in a materialistic society. Educational deficiencies mount as the lack of proper materials for learning is compounded by the lack of proper psychology for learning - the feeling that they belong in the classroom with the other students, Davis said. **POVERTY DIVIDE** "When the teacher says, 'Take out your supplies and put them in your desk,' and there's nothing to take out," Davis said, the message is clear to everyone: This kid is segregated by poverty. "The teacher and the students know who has and who hasn't." It's devastating by middle and high school, where adolescent insecurities and peer pressure are brutal, Davis said. "Can you imagine being a high school kid showing up with a Publix bag and a pack of notebook paper in it?" She treasures notes from teens who wrote that the supplies kept them from dropping out. On their first outing four years ago, Davis and her recruits collected, packed and distributed 1,000 backpacks. In 1997, they formally established the Kids 4 Kids Club. Twice a month, students get to school an hour early for projects like Valentine's and Halloween bags for homeless children, get-well cards, food drives and writing pen-pal notes. And in early August, they report to school early to assemble mountains of assorted supplies into well-equipped backpacks. "I heard about it from my science teacher," said Whitney Olmo, 11. "I stay in it because it feels good to help other people." This summer, Kids 4 Kids had \$50,000 to spend - part from \$12,000 checks from corporate sponsors like The Herald, the rest individual gifts ranging from \$5 to \$5,000. Wholesale buying stretched the sum over 4,000 students, most in Dade, but some in Broward and Palm Beach County. And there's a book for every child this year. **RELIED UPON** "This is the biggest source of supplies for homeless students that we have," said Juanita de la Cruz, project manager for homeless education for Miami-Dade schools. "We've come to rely on them." This year, Kids 4 Kids took a small step toward meeting a desperate need for uniforms for homeless Dade students. A donor gave a \$5,000 check, and specified that some of the money was to go for clothing. Kids 4 Kids was able to outfit the New Life Family Center's 31 children with new uniforms. But hundreds need uniforms, de la Cruz said. "It's a major problem."

CARDS CARRY KIDS' THANKS FOR RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

Miami Herald, October 24, 2000 1E DAVID MEEKS

In a world with no shortage of people to call attention to bad news, it's about time kindness had its own calling card. Make that thousands of calling cards. Children in the Kids 4 Kids Club at Jack Gordon Elementary School in Kendall have created "Random Acts of Kindness" cards to recognize nice people doing nice things. One side of each card includes original artwork by one of the 250 students in the club, while the other has a message. It says: "You just performed a random act of kindness. I noticed, and want to thank you for helping to make our community and our world a better place. Please enjoy the artwork on the other side, created by a child, and pass this card along to someone you see performing a random act of kindness." The project is the idea of Lynne Cameron, executive director of Neighbors 4 Neighbors, a nonprofit group affiliated with WFOR-Ch. 4 that connects people in need with those willing to help. The cards were handed out at a sneak preview of the new movie Pay It Forward. In the film, a middle school student accepts an extra-credit assignment to create a plan for world change and put it into action. The student's plan calls for each person to perform three random acts of kindness and ask the recipients not to pay it back, but to pay it forward with three more kind acts. The students in the Kids 4 Kids Club, comprised of second- through fifth-graders, did not attend the Pay It Forward screening because it is rated PG-13. Instead, their teacher, Beth Davis, and volunteers distributed the first 800 cards to moviegoers. "People were so excited they wanted to take two cards so they could keep one," Davis says. Davis and her students hope an outbreak of kindness carries the cards all over South Florida. The children drew whatever they wanted on the cards. "We just thought of it out of our own minds," said Devin Carter, 8, a third-grader. "We just said, 'If someone handed you a card because you did something special, what would you want to be on the card?'" Davis says. The cards are expressive, original and fun, in the spirit of their creators' innocence. There's a rising sun with "Be Very Kind" emblazoned across it, a black child and white child holding hands under the words, "You did the right thing," and an Olympic gold medal that just says, "Good job." The kids had a great time drawing the cards. "I like the ones with the hearts and rainbows," says secondgrader Anne Marie Zanbrano, 7. So what qualifies as an act of kindness? The children had plenty of suggestions. "Maybe cleaning up?" one said. "Helping another person," said another, "like when they need someone to open the door." "Caring about another person," a third offered. The students hope kindness catches on and that the cards change hands many times. "They'll never come back. They'll just keep going forward," Davis says. Cameron says she's wanted to do the kindness cards for about seven years, but the movie will be finished soon. "I can't begin to tell you how much this means to me. To see it happen and to see this great artwork, I think it is just wonderful," she says. Davis says she's happy to share the idea with anyone interested. Davis handed out the first card before she even made it to the movie. She was fumbling with an armload of cards and pamphlets in the theater parking lot when a man stopped to assist her. So she gave him a card. "He was reading it as he walked away," she says. "And then he just sort of turned around and smiled." Which is precisely the point.

Students in shelters get school supplies: Sun-Sentinel, August 11, 2000

The sudden buzzing of a kazoo caused a handful of children to delve deep into new backpacks to find the instrument that would let them add to a noisy unplanned symphony at Shepherd's Way homeless shelter in Fort Lauderdale on Friday. They would soon discover those same backpacks contained books, binders, pens and even daily planners -- all brand-new and purchased just for them. Throughout the Broward School District on Friday, similar discoveries were being made by underprivileged students in shelters. Broward County Schools' Homeless Education Program and the Kids 4 Kids Fill A Backpack Campaign provided an education shopping spree for more than 500 students. Patricia Canty, a resident at the shelter for three months, said the program helps the children because their parents can't afford to buy such nice things. "They would have had old stuff," said Canty, who has three children, ages 12, 10 and 9. "Some parents have to swallow their pride. If you need help, go for it. Everybody falls down and needs a helping hand," she said. This is the second year the two groups are teaming up to hand out backpacks to children in Broward. Every year since 1996, Kids 4 Kids, a self-esteem program, has donated about 5,500 new backpacks to homeless, abused, foster and migrant children. Broward County Schools has been providing supplies for 10 years. Together Friday, they delivered packs to about 12 shelters, including Children's Home Society. In the coming days, Kids 4 Kids will fill roughly 4,000 backpacks for children in Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties. "We wanted them to have something new," said Beth Davis, founder of Kids 4 Kids, who noted school supplies can cost \$30 to \$40. The 4,500 backpacks and supplies, purchased with donations from sponsors such as Union Bank and MARS Music -- provider of 3,000 kazoos -- were bought at a wholesale price of \$50,000, or \$200,000 off the retail value, Davis said. On Friday, not even the hot morning sun could chase the children away from a table stacked with boxes of new books, also donated by area businesses. Even the prekindergarteners quickly grasped the idea of grabbing as many books as they were allowed and stuffing them into their new backpacks. Smaller, colorful backpacks went to the younger children; older children, up to middle-school age, received black, heavy-duty book bags. Broward County Schools' Homeless Education Program is seeking donations for homeless children. For information, call Dianne Sepielli, project manager, at 954-768-8983

School supplies donated Backpacks, books, tablets for needy kids

August 12, 2000, in the Miami Herald BY GRIFF WITTE

Trunks popped open, car doors swung wide and, within seconds, a dozen looks of curious anticipation transformed into expressions of delight at newfound treasure. Inside a caravan of vehicles making the rounds at Broward Broward County dropoff points, were backpacks, books, pens, paper, stickers and kazoos -- in other words, all the essentials for back-to-school. The items were being given away by Kids 4 Kids, an organization trying to ensure that all South Florida children have the supplies they need when schools reopen later this month, even if their parents can't afford them. In all, 550 backpacks were distributed to homeless or abused Broward County children Friday. The giveaway marked the start of the 2000 Fill-A-Backpack Campaign. By the end of the month, about 4,000 backpacks will be delivered throughout the region, 3,000 of which will be given to children in Miami-Dade County Aug. 19-20 and Aug. 26-27. The other 500 will go to children in Palm Beach County. Glenn Olson's kids received three of the first backpacks to be handed out Friday. "I'm a single parent with three children and it's hard to make the ends meet on a single income. If it weren't for these guys, my kids wouldn't have backpacks," said Olson as he stood outside the Salvation Army building in Fort Lauderdale yesterday. "They might go back to school with a pencil, but that's it. On a single income, we don't get any luxuries." Kids 4 Kids president Beth Davis said she has been doing the giveaway for four years in memory of her grandfather. "My grandfather was homeless when he came here from Russia and someone helped him," Davis said. She also does it, she said, because of what she sees on a daily basis

as a MiamiDade public school teacher. "From the first day, you know who has and who does not," Davis said. "Not only do the teachers know, but the kids know as well. And, unfortunately, kids can be cruel. These kids don't need to be labeled as homeless on the first day." Although the backpack distribution served as another reminder that summer vacation is nearing an end, most of the kids who received the packs didn't seem to mind. Instead, they were focused on all their new stuff. "I love it because it has everything I need -- colored pencils, notebooks and a yellow piggy bank," said a beaming 12-year-old John Dorcinville. The backpacks and supplies were available because of donations from corporate sponsors, including Union Bank, CBS 4 and The Herald. Private donors also contributed to the program's \$50,000 budget. In addition to making a difference in terms of the experience that kids have at school this year, the program is also intended to benefit families by helping them make a permanent difference in their quality of life. "What this means is an extra \$25 or so that they can budget into living independently," said Karen Wood, the director of Hesed, a transitional facility in Dania Beach for abused women. "Every penny helps because every bit of money they have goes into buying the essentials."

Kids 4 Kids Makes Helping The Less Fortunate Cool At Jack D. Gordon Elementary School

United Teachers Of Dade-UTD TODAY February 2000

Kids who help less fortunate kids learn responsibility, compassion, sensitivity and appreciation for what they have. That is what science teacher Beth Davis, a UTD member, found when she formed a club called Kids 4 Kids at Jack D. Gordon Elementary School. Now in its fourth year, the club has grown to 250 students and membership has become a symbol of prestige at the school. "I want to help other kids. It's fun and I love Ms. Davis," said third grader Lovely Examar, who herself is an abused child who lives at the Children's Home Society. Each month during the school year, students have the opportunity to participate in a service project. The club meets before school twice a month. One month they wrote 300 get-well cards to children in Miami Children's Hospital. In October they assembled 300 Halloween bags that they distributed to homeless, Downs syndrome and hospitalized kids. In November they gathered enough donated food to provide eight Thanksgiving baskets to needy families, three of which had children in the Kids 4 Kids Club. Earlier in the year they wrote letters to United States soldiers in Kosovo. The most publicized Kids 4 Kids project was at the beginning of the school year when they donated backpacks loaded with supplies to 2000 homeless kids, 500 migrant kids and 500 abused and foster kids. Since becoming a non-profit organization a year ago, Kids 4 Kids has benefited greatly from some sizable donations from Target, The Miami Herald and WFOR Channel 4. The club also uses \$12,000 in prize money won by finishing second in a national contest sponsored by Northern Life Insurance Company and ReliaStar Financial Corp. Most of the money went to filling the backpacks and providing incentives for the kids, though some of it is being spent on helping other school start Kids 4 Kids clubs. On December 16, 1999 the students who had participated in three of the eight projects during the year were treated to a party, complete with a deejay, pizza and ice cream...all donated. In keeping with the mission of the club, autistic children from the Possible Dreams Foundation and from a local homeless shelter were invited as well. "The kids in this club work really hard and they deserve this party," said Davis, who recently became certified by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. "I'm convinced what the students do in this club will have an impact on their academic achievement." Davis sites a student she had who was a discipline problem in her science lab. After getting him involved in Kids 4 Kids, his behavior improved markedly by December. "I'm willing to bet his scores will go up too," said Davis.

TEACHER DEDICATES COSBY CAMEO TO HER KIDS 4 KIDS VOLUNTEERS THE

MIAMI HERALD November 14, 1999 Section: Neighbors WE BY TERE FIGUERAS,

Beth Davis, a science teacher at Jack D. Gordon Elementary, isn't a superstar. But maybe she should be. That's the idea behind a special hour long episode of *Cosby* that will air at 8 p.m. Wednesday on CBS4. Davis is featured in a dream sequence in which a teacher, played by Doug E. Doug, fantasizes about a world where educators - not athletes - get all the glory. In this upside-down world, basketball stars and football heroes are underpaid and underappreciated while teachers get celebrity endorsement deals and negotiate million-dollar contracts. In a spoof on celebrity gossip shows, Davis and two other teachers - one from Philadelphia and another from Boston - appear on *Education Tonight*. But the Country Walk resident didn't have to exercise her acting chops all that much - she plays herself. Davis was nominated for the part by the local network affiliate for her work with Kids 4 Kids, a nonprofit organization that provides school supplies and holiday treats for underprivileged kids in South Florida. So, does Davis want to "be like Mike"? Not really, but her network television debut gave her a chance to shine the spotlight on her favorite stars: the student volunteers of Kids 4 Kids who meet an hour before school starts every Wednesday to help their less-fortunate peers. "I really did this for Kids 4 Kids," said Davis, quick to downplay her role. "I'd only done a few little plays in high school and wasn't very good at it. I didn't even tell most of the kids I was going to be on TV, just that Kids 4 Kids was going to be mentioned - and that they might see someone they know." Davis started the program three years ago with 50 children - she now averages about 200 kids at each weekly meeting. Earlier this month, a camera crew dropped by Jack D. Gordon to film her segment. "It was kind of weird and I was nervous," Davis said. "I mean, what does one wear to an appearance on *The Cosby Show*?" But while Davis said she won't trade in her lesson plans for a studio limo any time soon, she is hoping one Hollywood star drops by her classroom for some extra credit.

KIDS' CARE PACKAGES FILLED WITH SUPPLIES MIAMI HERALD August 14, 1999 By JOHNNY DIAZ

You couldn't erase the Colgate smile Pamela Mohammed wore Friday morning as she sashayed down the street with her new backpack. It's not every day the pint-size 8-year-old gets a batch of school supplies for free. The black backpack, free. Notebooks, free. Pens, pencils and paper. Free, free, free. Mohammed was one of the dozen children from the Salvation Army-Plymouth Colony shelter in Hollywood to receive free backpacks and supplies from the Kids 4 Kids Club. It's a nonprofit program that has 185 Jack Gordon Elementary students in second through fifth grades who work to improve the lives of kids less fortunate than them. The club's philosophy: Poor kids should start school with new, top-quality backpacks loaded with school supplies so they get off to the same start as kids with more advantages. Kids 4 Kids raised about \$50,000 for the project from businesses such as Target, Pepsi and The Herald to buy the backpacks and supplies. This week, the kids delivered new, brightly colored backpacks filled with school supplies to young recipients that included 2,000 homeless children, 500 migrant children and 500 abused kids in protective custody in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties. The Kids 4 Kids Club members spent five hours a day stuffing the packs with folders, paper, pens, rulers, glue, crayons and pencils for this week's deliveries. "We want to make sure that when school starts, they have everything they need," said Beth Davis, founder of the Kids 4 Kids Club and a teacher at Jack Gordon Elementary in south Dade County. The program has provided thousands of backpacks to needy kids since 1996 in Miami-Dade. Davis said she started the Kids 4 Kids Club to give homeless children backpacks. Since then, it has grown big enough to place second last year among 2,000 entrants in a national awards competition called *Education's Unsung Heroes*. The club's \$12,000 prize went to start new clubs in other schools and to buy more backpacks for the homeless. Friday was the first time the program was extended into Broward County. Davis and company stopped at 10 shelters throughout Broward to deliver the goods Friday.

DRIVE FOR SCHOOL SUPPLIES BY KIDS, FOR KIDS GROWS

THE MIAMI HERALD September 5, 1997 Page: 1B GEOFFREY TOMB



Parents do for kids. Teachers do for kids. Suddenly, there is a way for kids to do for kids. And it is catching on, spreading from one school in South Dade to Broward and possibly other counties. Soon the world? Maybe. Called Kids 4 Kids, the goal is to supply brand new backpacks filled with brand new school supplies for some 2,000 homeless students in Dade and Broward, plus students who have AIDS or are abused. "There are not many ways for kids to do things for kids," said Beth Davis, a teacher at Jack Gordon Elementary School in Country Walk who inspired the voluntary program at the school last spring. Her idea was to get all 1,600 kids at Gordon to provide enough new school supplies to fill a backpack for an estimated 500 homeless and needy students at various schools in the system. Each grade level was asked to be responsible. Prekindergarten kids were asked to bring in a box of new crayons. Kindergarten kids were asked for notebook paper. Glue or paste came from the first-graders, composition books from second-graders, pencil cases from third-graders, scissors from

fourth-graders and a spiral notebook from each fifthgrader. By July, more than 550 backpacks jammed with supplies were ready. The stuff had to be new. "I hated to be a snob but homeless kids are always getting everything hand- me-down," Davis said. "We wanted everything to be new." With back-to-school under way this week, requests began to pour in. A grandmother with 10 grandchildren who were evicted from their home called asking for help. There were homeless kids in Broward. The 20 Target stores in Dade, Broward and Palm Beach agreed to serve through Sept. 12 as drop-off locations for anyone who wants to donate backpacks and supplies. Ryder System volunteered to pick up the donations. Newspapers, television and radio stations promoted the project. More donations. Other teachers at other schools are getting involved. "Every day it grows a little. We've gotten so big," Davis said. "Kids are starting to want to make a difference. Until now, they have just lacked the vehicle." At a meeting after school Wednesday, kid organizers suggested the program expand to include get-well cards for kids in hospitals that kids would personally distribute and being pen pals. Davis is now dreaming of becoming a national clearinghouse for children's school supplies.

Here are some Thank You Postcards from some of our satisfied "customers!"

"Thank you I loved your gift. You really helped my mom out. We really appreciate what you do. Because when you don't have a lot, you are thankful for getting stuff that you can't get on your own. God Bless You." Monique grade 5

"Oh thank you so much. It was really sweet of you to think of a stranger. I really like my new backpack and when I make some money one day, I will do the same for someone else. Thanks again and God Bless You All." Novella grade 10

"I would like to thank Kids 4 Kids for the backpack and all the supplies. I needed them badly for my first year in High School. I will study HARD. Thank you so much!" Jessica grade 9

"I was ashamed to be a senior in high school and carry my books in a Publix grocery bag. Now I have a beautiful backpack thanks to you guys. You are really special." Elizabeth grade 12

"My dad works hard to support me and my four brothers, but there was no money left for school supplies. Thank you for thinking of us when nobody else did. I will treasure my backpack always." Jeron grade 5

"When our house burned down, all my things were burned too. I was scared to go to school. Thank you for saving the day." Melanie grade 4

"Thank you for my Barbie backpack. I slept with it on my shoulders last night. It is the first one I have ever had and it is pink. I love you." dictated to mom by Stephanie grade 3

"Dear Santa, I lost my toys and all my things when we had to move out of our house. Can you please help us?
Love John" Written by a second grader who thought Santa left the backpack

"Last year I was a oneroll student. I like school. Thank you very much." Nick grade 4

"I want to thank all the kids who gave me the school supplies. I worried all summer that I wouldn't be able to get any. You helped me a lot, I really don't know how to thank you." Jaime grade 11

"Thank you for bringing me the Bat Girl Backpack. I am very happy. Now I can go to school and keep learning." Quella grade 2

"Thank you Kids 4 Kids if it wasn't for you I would of had to use the same broken bookbag from last year. I wish you get an award for helping people like us. I hope you have a very happy year. Thanks for the suprise." Esther grade 11

"Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules and summer vacation to come and bring us things and to see us." Demetrious grade 8

"I am very greatful and very thankful. This bookbag is big and pretty and it is big enough for all my books. Also it is good because my mom didn't have any money." Roberto grade 4
"Thank you for the awesome backpack. I was getting tired of carrying my books in my hands." Jonathan grade 10

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