

Information Packet



GREEN BAY SHOE CLOSET



Dear Corporate Relay participant,

On a fall morning in 2016, I sat in my friend's car, driving to Green Bay East High School. Mitchell and I both ran cross country for East, and were knee-deep in the season. This particular day, we discussed the new host of injuries on the team. Mitchell knew the status of every injury. He said, "Nick is currently out on a knee injury, he stepped funny on a rock last meet, he'll be fine. Olivia is still out with that foot injury, it's been a while, maybe it's a stress fracture." He went on and on, listing off each injury. The last example stuck with me to this day. "Mason's still nursing that hip injury he got last year. It's not his fault though, his family can't afford good shoes. He just runs on the same pair year after year, causing his injury. His older brother had the same issue."

This example of Mason represents many students on the cross country team; at East, the poverty rate is over 60%. I realized Mason running was an exception; students of poverty likely turned away from running due to equipment costs, just as occurs for other sports.

After hearing Mason's story, I envisioned a program where these students in need could receive shoes for free, instead of getting injured by running on the same pair of shoes. Inspired, I applied for a small grant, and received enough money to test my idea, which I called the Green Bay Shoe Closet. With East's social worker, Sandra Waubanascum, I created an infrastructure to identify students on the team in need, while respecting their privacy. Only she would know who receives shoes.

The first season showed the need for shoes was overwhelming. The money needed was nearly double the grant. Thankfully, an anonymous donor stepped in, and covered the extra money. After operating the program for a season, I connected with a shoe company representative and a local shoe store. With these partnerships, we nearly halved the price per shoe. I also applied for enough grants to run the program at East through the 2018-2019 school year. We recently set up a way for people to donate shoes directly to the Shoe Closet. Thanks to the support of many people and organizations, as of 2018, the Shoe Closet has provided shoes to 33 students below the poverty line.

In the coming years, I hope to expand the Green Bay Shoe Closet to all four high schools in the Green Bay Area Public Schools. We currently only operate at East High School due to limited funding. Expanding to the entire district would allow us to help a much greater amount of students. We estimate that 130 students could benefit from this program district-wide.

Through providing proper running shoes to students below the poverty line, the Shoe Closet's aims to increase the participation in distance running sports in all high schools. By decreasing the injuries among students of poverty, the Shoe Closet opens up the vast benefits running offers.

Please find in the packet all the information about donating to the Green Bay Shoe Closet. I invite your generosity in supporting the Green Bay Shoe Closet. By supporting us, you are running alongside these students in need. Help students win the race to success, one pair of shoes at a time.

Sincerely,

Joel Kiernan
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How We Operate

Respecting student privacy is at the core of how the Green Bay Shoe Closet operates. In order to maintain the complete privacy of students who qualify, we work together with team coaches and school social workers. First we obtain a list of all the students participating in cross country or track long-distance running. We then give this list to the school social worker, who identifies students below the poverty line through their free/reduced lunch qualification or homelessness status. The school social worker then individually talks to each student, explaining the Shoe Closet program, and asking for the shoe sizes. The Green Bay Shoe Closet then uses funds we have to provide a pair of shoes in that size to those students.

Why Running?

Running requires very little equipment: only a pair of proper running shoes. In this sense, it is one of the purest sports. Still, some students can't afford to buy even a pair of running shoes. These students then face a decision: either run on the same pair of shoes, year after year, which will quickly injure the athlete; or stop running altogether. Therefore, the Green Bay Shoe Closet can encourage injury-free extracurricular participation among students of poverty by providing a simple pair of shoes. Since running requires such little equipment, we can reach more students than we could through other sports.

How to Help

The Corporate Relay is a friendly competition between Bellin Corporate Challenge corporations. In it, corporations compete to help economically disadvantaged students participate in running sports through the Green Bay Shoe Closet. Methods to donate to the Shoe Closet are discussed in the "How to Donate" section.

Here's how you can help support the Shoe Closet's mission: you can send this information packet to your company's charitable giving division; you can give handouts to your fellow employees, or even just leave them somewhere people will see them; you can ask your fellow employees to donate; you can donate services; or anything else. Resources, such as pre-drafted emails, handouts, and our video are also available. Contact me at peterkiernan@gbshoecloset.org if you don't have these materials.

Benefits to Students

As shown in a Gallup poll, Green Bay is the tenth most obese city in the country, with an obesity rate of 33.0%. A drastic change must be made in Green Bay to make it a more healthy community. The Green Bay Shoe Closet believes this change must start with local children.

The Shoe Closet focuses on the youth most at-risk of becoming obese: high schoolers in poverty. As a study by Adam Drewnoski states, “There is no question that the rates of obesity... follow a socioeconomic gradient, such that the burden of disease falls disproportionately on people with limited resources, racial-ethnic minorities, and the poor.” GBAPS is an especially poor district: almost 60% of the students are economically disadvantaged compared to the national average of 12.3% poverty. Additionally, GBAPS is a very diverse district with only 45.7% of students being white, while the US is 76.6% white, according to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction’s Accountability Report Cards and the United States Census Bureau. The Green Bay Shoe Closet serves at-risk students, encouraging students of poverty to participate in cross country. Students of poverty are unlikely to participate in sports, as shown by a study by Thomas C. Wilson. We are directly counteracting this issue in order to improve the health of Green Bay.

The Green Bay Shoe Closet removes barriers to participating in running for students of poverty. These students then can reap the benefits running offers.

Foremost, enabling students to participate in cross country helps these students’ health. Cross country training is designed to slowly ramp students up from lower levels of fitness to running over 20 miles a week. Many students join cross country without having run much in their lives, and emerge as capable, fit athletes. Cross country can create a lifelong running habit. As a study by Daniel Perkins states, “adolescent sports participation... [is] a significant predictor of young adults’ participation in sports and physical fitness activities.” The Shoe Closet directly motivates participation in running, improving students’ current and future health. A simple pair of shoes encourages students of poverty at risk for becoming obese to pursue a life of fitness.

Enabling students in need to participate in running also helps their well being in a larger sense. Running teaches a variety of life skills, from hard work to perseverance. Cross country teams are especially tight-knit. The team, therefore, creates a unique and positive support network for the students reached by the Shoe Closet: a community they may not find anywhere else. Additionally, sports participation decreases the likelihood of students engaging in health risking behaviors such as drug use, sexual intercourse and violent behaviors, as stated in an article by Randy M. Page and other researchers.

Students of poverty are less likely to participate in extracurricular activities. By removing a barrier to participation, the Shoe Closet opens up the associated benefits of cross country to students in need. Extracurriculars improve at-risk students’ academic achievement and increase graduation rate, as shown by a study by S. B. Gerner and another study by Joseph Mahoney and Robert B. Cairns.

Budget

East: 66% Poverty Rate					Preble: 43.9% Poverty Rate				
	Sport	Membership	Runners in Poverty	Total Cost		Sport	Membership	Runners in Poverty	Total Cost
2020	Track	11	8	\$393.60	2020	Track	22	10	\$492.00
	Cross Country	38	26	\$1,279.20		Cross Country	93	41	\$2,017.20
	Total	49	34	\$1,672.80		Total	115	51	\$2,509.20
2021	Track	13	9	\$442.80	2021	Track	25	11	\$541.20
	Cross Country	42	28	\$1,377.60		Cross Country	103	46	\$2,263.20
	Total	55	37	\$1,820.40		Total	128	57	\$2,804.40
2022	Track	15	10	\$492.00	2022	Track	28	13	\$639.60
	Cross Country	47	32	\$1,574.40		Cross Country	114	51	\$2,509.20
	Total	62	42	\$2,066.40		Total	142	64	\$3,148.80
		Total Membership	Total Runners in Poverty	Total Cost			Total Membership	Total Runners in Poverty	Total Cost
3 Year Total	Total	166	113	\$5,559.60	3 Year Total	Total	385	172	\$8,462.40

Southwest: 40.3% Poverty Rate					West: 62.2% Poverty Rate				
	Sport	Membership	Runners in Poverty	Total Cost		Sport	Membership	Runners in Poverty	Total Cost
2020	Track	16	7	\$344.40	2020	Track	9	6	\$295.20
	Cross Country	42	17	\$836.40		Cross Country	26	17	\$836.40
	Total	58	24	\$1,180.80		Total	35	23	\$1,131.60
2021	Track	18	8	\$393.60	2021	Track	10	7	\$344.40
	Cross Country	47	19	\$934.80		Cross Country	29	19	\$934.80
	Total	65	27	\$1,328.40		Total	39	26	\$1,279.20
2022	Track	20	9	\$442.80	2022	Track	11	7	\$344.40
	Cross Country	52	21	\$1,033.20		Cross Country	32	20	\$984.00
	Total	72	30	\$1,476.00		Total	43	27	\$1,328.40
		Total Membership	Total Runners in Poverty	Total Cost			Total Membership	Total Runners in Poverty	Total Cost
3 Year Total	Total	195	81	\$3,985.20	3 Year Total	Total	117	76	\$3,739.20

This budget shows the expected number of qualifying students by projecting the poverty rate onto the team enrollment. We use a 10% growth rate on every team per year, and our current price-per-shoe of \$49.20. This is the closest estimate possible. Track enrollment only includes distance runners, as we currently only provide shoes to distance runners in poverty.

As can be seen here, running the program across the district requires approximately \$6000 per year. If every corporation in the Bellin Corporate Challenge donated at least \$100— enough money for two pairs of shoes— we would be entirely funded across the district for a year.

Your Donation:

We accept any amount of donation. As the Green Bay Shoe Closet is run by volunteers, all donated money goes directly towards the cause. The suggested donation amount for the Corporate Relay is \$100, which is enough money for two pairs of shoes. However, the corporations that wish to have a larger impact should donate more than that— for example \$500, which would fund ten pairs of shoes, or \$1000, which funds 20 pairs of shoes.

Recognition for donation

The corporation that donates the most money will receive a traveling plaque, which can be kept for a year until the corporation defends their title at next year's Corporate Challenge Kickoff. Additionally, a Bellin Run elite athlete will make an appearance at the the winning corporation's business. All donors will be recognized in a Facebook post on the Green Bay Shoe Closet page, and will be mentioned on our website.

How to Donate

Money can be donated to the Shoe Closet through a variety of means. Checks can be addressed to Green Bay East High School, and restricted to the "Green Bay Shoe Closet." Check should be mailed to East High School at 1415 E. Walnut Street, Green Bay, WI 54301. Additionally, we have a GoFundMe page at gofundme.com/green-bay-shoe-closet, but the transaction fees on this make it less preferable than checks. However, it could still be useful for fundraising from employees! If you choose to go this route, make sure that donors leave a comment counting their donation towards your corporation

Help does not need to come in the form of money or shoes, however; donated services allow us to save money in order to help more students of poverty. Possible donated services range from printing services to website design to PR advice. If you have any connections at a shoe store or shoe company, or any other skills that would be useful to us, please contact me at peterkiernan@gbshoecloset.org.