



PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WITH TWO PHOTOS
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**Catie's Closet Fills the Bus
with 51,200 Pieces of Clothing**

DRACUT, MA – As Catie's Closet's Fill the Bus initiative ends, the organization is celebrating the successful collection of over 51,200 pieces of clothing to support local students experiencing poverty.

The organization gathered over 2,048 bags of donated clothing, received more than 162 "Confidence Packs" and welcomed 287 participants in its 5K. Catie's Closet exceeded all goals for this year's event, and numbers are expected to grow as drives are still ongoing and donations continue to roll in.

Each piece of clothing, toiletry item and school supply will go directly to students living in poverty across Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Catie's Closet currently serves 55,000 students in need of basic essentials. Whether students are learning from home or in school, these items are critical to their overall success and well-being, especially during this "new normal".

"Words cannot adequately describe how thankful we are for the incredible support and participation we received in this year's Fill The Bus," said Mickey Cockrell, CEO and Co-Founder of Catie's Closet. "COVID-19 certainly presented us with many challenges for this year's event, but thanks to our dedicated community members and corporate partners, we will successfully meet the growing needs of our students."

Fill The Bus ran from August 5, 2020-September 30, 2020. Due to restrictions caused by COVID-19, Catie's Closet, which is celebrating its 10-year anniversary this year, offered several virtual opportunities for individuals and companies to participate, including hosting virtual company and individual drives, dropping off donations, shopping from Amazon Smile wish lists and participating in the first virtual Catie's Closet 5K.

Each 5K registration fee funded the purchase of a brand-new pair of sneakers for a student in need. With registrations and additional donations from 5Kers, Catie's Closet purchased more than 600 pairs of sneakers.

While Fill The Bus has come to an end, opportunities for the community to support local students in poverty remain. Those interested in helping Catie's Closet provide basic essentials to students in need can make a donation at catiescloset.org, shop from the [Amazon Smile wish list](#), or [drop off](#) clothing, toiletry or school supply donations at the Dracut or Boston distribution centers. Visit catiescloset.org to learn more about how to get involved.

“COVID-19 caused many families to enter poverty at new and deeper levels,” said Cockrell. “This school year, our students’ needs are greater than they have ever been, and the number of students we serve continues to grow. The success of Fill the Bus allows us to adjust to these needs and be there for our students no matter their situation or where they are attending class.”



Photo Cutline: Libby Magalhaes, Merchandise Manager at Catie’s Closet (left), and Kodja Baye-Cigna, Program Director (right), celebrate the success of Catie’s Closet’s fifth annual Fill the Bus back-to-school initiative. Thus far, the organization has gathered 2,048 bags and 51,200 pieces of donated clothing, received 162 “Confidence Packs” and welcomed 287 participants in its 5K. All proceeds and donations will benefit students experiencing poverty in Massachusetts and New Hampshire.



Photo Cutline: The team at Catie’s Closet stacked over 600 boxes of brand-new pairs of sneakers at the Dracut Distribution Center before providing them to local students in need. Catie’s Closet welcomed 287 participants in its first ever 5K. Registrations and additional monetary gifts made the purchase of these sneakers possible.

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Established in 2010, Catie’s Closet is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that

improves school attendance and the self-esteem of students living in poverty by offering in-

school closets filled with free clothing, toiletries and other necessities. Serving 55,000 students, Catie's Closet is offered in 87 schools across nine school districts in Massachusetts and New Hampshire with distribution centers in Dracut and Boston, Massachusetts. More information is available at catiescloset.org.