



PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WITH PHOTO
August 4, 2023

Contact: Amanda Harvey
amanda@catiescloset.org

**Catie's Closet in Need of Back-to-School
Donations to Support Local Students in Poverty**

DRACUT, MA - With the new school year quickly approaching, Catie's Closet is seeking the community's help to donate clothing, toiletries, and school supplies in support of local children in need.

This urgent call for donations is part of the organization's eighth annual Fill the Bus initiative. Fill the Bus is a critical part of Catie's Closet's efforts to prepare its three Distribution Centers for the demands of the back-to-school season.

Catie's Closet currently serves 85,000 students in 125 schools across Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

"As we continue to grow and reach more students in need, our Fill the Bus initiative becomes increasingly more important every year," says Mickey Cockrell, CEO and Co-Founder of Catie's Closet. "Our community's support during this time of year allows us to adequately serve our students, granting them access to everything they need as they start a new school year," she adds.

In a recent student survey conducted by Catie's Closet at the end of the last school year, 93% percent of students said they feel it's important to have access to clothing and necessities in their schools. Ninety-six percent said this access helps them with self-esteem and fitting in with peers.

Fill the Bus will run from August 1, 2023 through September 30, 2023. The organization's goal is to collect 80,000 items for children and teens, which is enough to fill 16 school buses.

Individuals and families interested in helping local students in grades preK-12 can do any of the following:

- [Purchase and donate](#) new clothes and/or full-sized toiletries.
- [Make a \\$50 donation](#) to purchase urgently needed items.
- [Start your own fundraiser](#) for your friends and family to join your support efforts.

- Clean out closets and [donate gently used items](#) in youth and teen styles that students would be proud to wear. Please check our donation criteria before dropping off donations.
- [Host a clothing drive.](#)
- [Register for the fourth annual Catie's Closet Every Step of the Way virtual 5K.](#) The \$30 registration fee purchases a brand-new pair of sneakers for a child in need.

Companies that would like to support the 2023 Fill the Bus initiative and achieve 100% employee participation can:

- [Host a company clothing drive.](#)
- Choose from six different [sponsorship options](#) that fit your company's goals and values.
- [Provide Confidence Packs](#) by making a monetary donation or purchasing items for the pack of your choice and inviting employees to assemble the packs at your company.
- [Register your company as a team in the fourth annual Catie's Closet Every Step of the Way 5K.](#) Each participating employee's \$30 registration fee funds the purchase of a brand-new pair of sneakers for a child in need. Increase company participation by covering the registration fee for your employees.

Item donors and drive hosts can arrange a drop-off at the Catie's Closet Distribution Centers in Dracut, East Longmeadow, or Boston, MA.

For more information about Catie's Closet and Fill the Bus, visit catiescloset.org. Questions? Click [Contact Us](#) on the website to reach out directly.



Photo cutline: Catie's Closet's eighth annual Fill the Bus initiative kicked off on August 1, 2023 and will run through September 30, 2023. This is the organization's largest call for donations of youth and teen clothing, toiletries, and school supplies to get students in need back to school with all the critical items that are necessary for their success. Learn more at catiescloset.org/events.

###

Established in 2010, Catie's Closet is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that gives students in need life-changing access to clothing and basic necessities. With its In-School Closet Program and SOS Urgent Response Program, the organization serves more than 85,000 students. Catie's Closet is offered in more than 120 schools across 11

school districts in Massachusetts and New Hampshire with distribution centers in Dracut, Boston, and Springfield, Massachusetts. More information is available at catiescloset.org.