



PRESS RELEASE
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Catie's Closet's *SOS Urgent Response Program* Depleted by Unprecedented Influx of Child Poverty, Homelessness, and Newcomers

\$250,000+ Required to Provide Emergency Clothing, Shoes, School Supplies, and Hygiene Products to Low-Income and Migrant Children Across Massachusetts and New Hampshire

1,000+ Children on the SOS Urgent Response Waitlist

Amazon Announces \$50,000 Gift to Kick-Start Urgent Need Giving

DRACUT, MA - Catie's Closet, which provides essential clothing, shoes, school supplies, and hygiene products to more than 90,000 low-income children in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, is seeking the community's assistance as it is experiencing an unprecedented increase of special requests that have depleted its SOS Urgent Response Program.

The rapidly growing needs are a direct result of the steep rise in child poverty, homelessness, and the arrival of newcomers to our schools and communities. The organization is receiving hundreds of SOS (Special Order System) orders weekly from its partner schools and social service agencies urgently requesting clothing and basic necessities for children, teens, and families in need.

There are over 1,000 children on the SOS Urgent Response Waitlist, a number that is expected to grow significantly due to continued upward pressures of need. The SOS Urgent Response Program is currently at a standstill, unable to fill these orders due to a lack of funding and inventory of key new item categories, including new socks and underwear, and special-sized shoes, coats, and clothing.

Catie's Closet is seeking donations in any amount to raise \$250,000 to replenish its fall Urgent Response inventory, which will allow the organization to purchase critically needed essentials. To support the entire school year of special request orders, \$500,000 is required. The organization also seeks urgent in-kind donations.

“Never before in Catie’s Closet history have we seen this amount of SOS orders with such a high level of need,” said Mickey Cockrell, CEO and Co-Founder of Catie’s Closet. “We are seeing first-hand the impact of today’s economic situation and how it’s affecting children and families living in our communities. We are turning to our supportive community to help us replenish our SOS Urgent Response Program fund and inventory and allow us to continue helping these children in need.”

Amazon has announced a \$50,000 commitment to kick-start urgent need giving.

“At Amazon, we are committed to giving back wherever possible, especially in the communities in which our employees live and work. When we heard about this urgent need to support the SOS program, we knew we needed to step up,” said Jerome Smith, Amazon’s Head of Community Engagement in New England. “Every child should be able to go to school and feel good about themselves. We hope our commitment will inspire others to help meet this critical need.”

Charles River Apparel, Lowell Five Bank, and UKG have also committed an additional \$40,000 to fund the program.

The Catie’s Closet SOS Urgent Response Program is designed to meet the immediate needs of children who are transitioning between stable living conditions. This includes children who are homeless, moving into foster care, newcomers to the United States, fire victims, and survivors of abusive situations. All of these circumstances are extremely traumatic for children and teens.

The organization’s school and vetted social service agency partners can place a special request order stating each individual child’s unique needs. Catie’s Closet then creates a customized package with up to two weeks’ worth of clothing and other basic essentials. The goal is to deliver the special package within 48 hours for a rapid response providing immediate relief. However, with the overwhelming demand, the organization is reporting that this goal is impossible to meet, leaving children without clothing and basic necessities for a longer period of time.

“My daughter, Catie, saw how difficult it was for her peers who were struggling to attend school, and our SOS program helps ensure children in need receive the clothing and essentials they need to be able to show up to school, ready to learn,” says Anne-Marie Sousa, Catie’s Closet’s Board Chair and Founder. “We wouldn’t be able to achieve our work without the generous support of our local community members, philanthropic families, and area businesses. We are thankful for anyone who is able to help in any way.”

To help Catie’s Closet continue filling urgent orders, you can donate [online here](#) or mail a check to Catie’s Closet, 28 Loon Hill Road, Dracut, MA 01826. Please select SOS Urgent Response Program in the designation drop-down if you donate online. To donate new or gently used clothing and supplies, please visit [this page](#) for information on drop-off locations, donation criteria, and links to Amazon wish lists.

In addition to the SOS Urgent Response Program, Catie’s Closet operates its In-School Closet Program, which serves students in 125 schools across Massachusetts and New Hampshire. The

organization runs these programs from its three Distribution Centers in Merrimack Valley, Boston, and Western MA.



Photo cutline: Prior to the fund depletion, a sea of SOS Urgent Response Orders filled with two weeks' worth of clothing and toiletries, covered a table awaiting their delivery to children and teens in need across Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Without adequate funding and inventory, it's impossible for Catie's Closet to continue its SOS Urgent Response Program. The organization is requesting donations from the community to help raise \$250,000 to replenish the SOS Urgent Response Program fund for the fall.



Photo Cutline: Two examples of completed SOS Urgent Response orders. Isabella and Sophia are being supported by a Catie's Closet social service partner as they endure a transition in their current living situation. Their customized packages included clothing, socks, underwear, menstrual products, and hygiene items to fill their most basic immediate needs and provide them with relief.

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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 90,000 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.