



# Collect for Kids

Britepaths is seeking the community's support to assist at least 2,500 students in need in advance of the 2017-2018 school year.

**People are often surprised to learn that there is hunger and need in prosperous Fairfax County.** In fact, nearly 72,000 Fairfax County residents lived in poverty in 2015, including nearly 19,000 children. Approximately 28 percent of students in Fairfax County Public Schools qualify for free or reduced-price meals, which indicates that they and their families are struggling to pay for food and other necessities.

Fairfax-based non-profit Britepaths (formerly Our Daily Bread) has long provided food and financial assistance to individuals and families in need in the Fairfax County area, along with financial education, mentoring and other supports that aim to help them recover and maintain their financial stability.

Recognizing that purchasing school supplies can present a hardship for families who are struggling, Britepaths began providing school supply assistance 15 years ago. In 2011, Britepaths joined the Collect for Kids partnership that was founded that year by non-profit Kids R First, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), the Fairfax County Office of Public-Private Partnerships, to ensure that more students in need in the County receive school supply assistance. The initiative brings together government, companies and community organizations along with a variety of local non-profits who coordinate their efforts and use their shared buying power to purchase quality school supplies at a deep discount.

The partnership makes it possible for Britepaths' Collect for Kids Back to School Program to purchase all the supplies a student needs for approximately \$15 per student (and often \$10 or less for elementary students), where it can often cost \$40 or more per child to purchase the necessary supplies from retail stores.

Thanks to generous supporters in our community, Britepaths was able to provide school supplies to more than 2,600 qualified needy children who attend Fairfax County Public Schools in 2016. Most of the students attend schools in the Fairfax High School and J.E.B. Stuart High School pyramids, but Britepaths also works with additional FCPS schools that seek assistance to help their students.



A counselor at an FCPS middle school that received supplies through Britepaths' Program noted the ongoing benefits to students. "These supplies were of enormous help toward the academic success of our financially neediest students. The supplies helped alleviate their stress and anxiety about starting school. These students made connections with their counselors and allowed counselors to continue to support them through the year. Great on-going counseling relationships were established with these students due to the early-in-the-year introductions to distribute supplies to them."

Britepaths is seeking the community's support to assist at least 2,500 students in need in advance of the 2017-2018 school year. Donations are collected in July and early August, and distributed to schools in mid-August so that counselors and social workers have the supplies in hand to distribute to the students who need them when school starts in late August.

#### Get Involved in Britepaths' Collect for Kids Back to School Program

There are a variety of ways for individuals, families, companies and organizations to help Britepaths' Collect for Kids Back to School Program this summer. Britepaths is currently seeking Program Sponsors and Backpack Collection sites. The Donation drive runs from July 1 through August 5. Volunteers will be needed to help sort and distribute supplies from July 31 through August 11.

- Donate funds to help with the purchase of school supplies, or donate backpacks (larger sizes are especially needed) or scientific calculators (TI-30Xa or TI-84).
- Be a Program Sponsor.
- Serve as a Backpack Collection site.
- Organize a Collection of Cash, Backpacks and Calculators at your office, or with a community organization, childrens' summer program or faith community.
- Volunteer to help Britepaths sort and distribute the supplies to its partner schools.



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