

## Run a Gift Card Drive to Help Our Families!

If you are part of a group or organization looking for a meaningful way to volunteer in our community, please consider running a grocery store gift card drive to help our Food Bridge families. In addition to the 60 Fairfax County area families who are on our four-month food assistance program, more than 200 families are referred to us each year who need emergency food assistance to help them feed their children while they are working through a temporary financial crisis.

The gift cards you collect will help us fill gaps in our food delivery calendar for our families when no Supporting Organization is available to help, and they will help families in crisis purchase milk and fresh foods for their kids to supplement the pantry supplies we provide when they're referred for emergency assistance.

Grocery store gift cards allow our clients to meet the specific dietary needs of their family, which may include managing food allergies. The cards also allow parents to make good nutritional choices for their children that include fruits, vegetables and dairy items we can't store in our pantry or easily deliver. The gift cards also allow our clients to practice newly acquired financial management skills they receive through our Financial Literacy Program, by helping them get the most out of every dollar they spend for food.

### Instructions for Running a Gift Card Drive

**Plan Ahead!** We will help arrange with a grocery store that is convenient to you and willing to partner with us to do the collection, but it can take some time to make these arrangements, so please factor this in to your planning.

- **This is a Group Project!** Your group must have a Volunteer Coordinator who will be responsible for the gift card drive from start to finish. This includes contacting Britepaths to start the process and recruiting volunteers to help with the drive. It is very important that all volunteers behave in a respectful manner to customers and respect the wishes of anyone who is not interested in donating. There must be a volunteer aged 18 or older in charge of each shift. If children are participating, they must be on their best behavior and well supervised if they are under the age of 12. Please remember your group will be representing Britepaths. You may find the free on-line service Sign-Up Genius an easy way to coordinate who is covering your volunteer shifts.
- **This is an Independent Project.** Volunteer groups interested in taking on this project must be willing to conduct the entire project independently without having Britepaths' staff present. This greatly reduces our administrative costs and increases the impact of the drive.
- **Britepaths will contact the grocery store to set up the drive.** Contact Christina Garris at [cgarris@britepaths.org](mailto:cgarris@britepaths.org) and let her know which local grocery stores are most convenient to you and provide some dates that will work. Our request usually needs to be made at the corporate level. Please be aware that it may take several weeks to get clearance from the grocery store to do the drive.
- **Start and end time to be determined by Volunteer Coordinator and store manager.** Usually the group splits the time in 2-hour shifts, with at least 3 volunteers per shift.
- **Volunteers will set up a table with flyers and a donation box.** An adult (18+) must be present at all times to supervise the donation box. Flyers and materials will be provided by Britepaths and may be picked up at our office in the week leading up to the drive.
- **Volunteer Coordinator will deliver the donated cards to Britepaths' office.** Please deliver the gift cards, pantry donations and table materials we provided in the week following the drive.

Contact Chris Garris at [cgarris@britepaths.org](mailto:cgarris@britepaths.org) or 703-273.8829, ext. 444 to learn more.