

Drive to Collect School Supplies; Our Support of Crayons to Classrooms



By Josie Olsvig
Public Service & Congeniality
Montgomery City Dept of
Job & Family Service



Tools For Teachers. Success For Students

The Public Service & Congeniality Committee of the Dayton Bar Association has recently forged a partnership with a local non-profit agency called “Crayons to Classrooms” (DC2C). This organization is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit teacher resource center that helps under-funded teachers from low-income schools in the Dayton region obtain free school supplies for their economically disadvantaged students. Supplies are provided at no cost to teachers, families, or schools. Previously, the Committee had sponsored just one local inner-city school, Mary Queen of Peace, located near Grandview Hospital. It is believed that through this new partnership, the Committee, with the support of local attorneys, can serve far more students and have a greater impact. Moreover, Mary Queen of Peace is one of the many schools served by Crayons to Classrooms.

Although Crayons to Classrooms is a recently established agency in the Dayton area, first opening in 2008, it is part of a national model. There are twenty-five Resource Centers similar to Crayons to Classrooms serving school children throughout the United States. This national network of resource centers is administered by The Kids In Need Foundation, which is also based in Dayton. The closest sister program is located in Cincinnati and has been thriving for several years now.

I have been impressed with this agency’s planful approach to throwing down roots in our community and its sound organizational foundation. The first step taken by local citizens interested in developing this program was to secure qualified professionals

who could conduct a feasibility study. After gaining favorable results from this study, it moved forward in soliciting the help of various grantmakers and foundations. Three principal sources gave commitments to the program and start-up support: the Dayton Foundation, the Mathile Family Foundation, and The Kids In Need Foundation. With this backing, a pilot project was initiated in January 2009 with eight schools. By the end of the summer in August 2009, twenty-three schools had been added to the list. As of this writing, 34 schools are now being assisted by DC2C.

Crayons to Classrooms has furthermore partnered with Goodwill Easter Seals Miami Valley to streamline its operation. The agencies share a clean, well-lighted facility off Stanley Avenue. In addition, to enjoying reduced rental expenses, DC2C also benefits from Goodwill clients seeking work experience. These individuals bolster the program by providing numerous hours of labor through their sorting, organizing and displaying of products in the Crayons to Classrooms showroom. In 2010, DC2C had over 300 corporate and individual donors who contributed to the program. Some of the 30 corporate donors include such entities as Target, Kohl’s, Premier Health Partners, Mead/Westvaco, DP&L, Standard Register, and Battelle & Battelle. It also had the backing of 28 grants. As of February 2011, a total of 632 volunteers gave over 3, 147 hours of volunteer time to the program. All of this ensures the program’s sustainability and continued growth.

This program continues to expand, serv-

ing an ever increasing number of teachers and students. Nearly 2,000 teachers have visited the Crayons to Classrooms facility since its opening. Over a million dollars of merchandise has been distributed, which has benefited more than 13, 000 students.

The Public Service & Congeniality Committee plans to start its school supply drive in the near future. You will see colorfully decorated barrels at the Dayton Bar Association and in various local law offices. If you are interested in having a collection barrel at your office, please let me know and I will make sure one is set up. Contact me at 225-4078. If you would like to drop off supplies or a financial contribution to the Dayton Bar Association, they would be happy to receive your contribution. Checks may be made payable to the Dayton Bar Foundation, please list “Crayons to Classrooms” in the memo portion. ●

