



NEWS

Business Volunteer Connect, a program of the Volunteer Center of Bergen County

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Bring the Joy of Reading to a Young Child

Northern New Jersey---Studies show that reading to a child, especially early learners, is the single most important thing a parent can do to help the child acquire language, develop a love of learning and prepare for school - leading to greater academic success.

Often, children in low-income families lack access to books. These families are struggling to pay for rent, utilities and food, so books are far down on the list of must-have items.

To address this need in Bergen County, **Business Volunteer Connect**, a program of the Volunteer Center of Bergen County, has kicked off its annual **Books in a Bag** campaign. The goal of the program is to collect 5,000 NEW books during January and February. The books will be distributed to 1,000 children enrolled in programs in early learning centers throughout the county.

The campaign will culminate on Read Across America Day on March 3rd, which also commemorates Theodore “Dr. Seuss” Geisel’s March birthday. On that day, the collected books will be delivered to the children by dozens of corporate volunteers, who will also stay to read to the children.

Companies or individuals are invited to bring the joy of reading to a child. **Books in a Bag** is a turnkey, onsite volunteer project perfect for companies of any size. Participating companies will receive a toolkit with detailed instructions on successfully implementing the program. For more information, contact Ellen Lutvak, Business Volunteer Connect manager, at elutvak@bergenvolunteers.org or call 201-489-9454, x133.

Individuals may purchase books online by going to businessvolunteerconnect.org. Those books will be shipped to the Volunteer Center, then assembled in backpacks and delivered to children. The deadline for ordering books is February 14th.

“Since 2000, almost 75,000 books have been distributed to 15,000 children in low-income families through *Books in a Bag*”, says Amanda Missey, senior director of Civic and Community Engagement at the Volunteer Center. “Getting involved in this initiative is a great way for a company to do good work in the community. As Dr. Seuss said, ‘Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.’”

Business Volunteer Connect is the one-stop shop for everything connected to employee volunteer and corporate community engagement. Employee volunteering is good for business. Studies show that consumers prefer to do business with companies that give back to the community, and savvy employers know that the company benefits from improved morale and skill development when their employees are involved in volunteer service.

The Volunteer Center of Bergen County strengthens the community by connecting people through service and developing civic leaders.

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