

## THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR VOLUNTEERS!



**April is National Volunteer Month**, when we honor the volunteers in our communities who give of their time and talent, and encourage volunteerism throughout the month.

It seems appropriate - and because we asked all the time- to explain our name, "Volunteers" of America. The name Volunteers of America was selected when we were founded, in 1896 to signify that we were an organization comprised of people voluntarily choosing to make service their life work. In those days, a volunteer was anyone who was committed to a mission or cause. Since its earliest days, when Volunteers of America brought food, medicine and comfort to people not served by other charities, volunteering has been instrumental in every aspect of our work.

Thank you to all of our volunteers today; we couldn't do what we do without you! This month we'd like to recognize recent groups who volunteered with us including:

- **McGraw Hill Education** who hosted an Easter Party at one of our domestic violence shelters, complete with crafts, sweet treats, and face-painting for the children.
- **Princeton Women's Network** and **Princeton Alumni of NYC** who prepared "Birthdays-in-a-Box" for children at our family shelters, which contained hand-made cards and three wrapped gifts for each child celebrating their birthday in March.
- **Barclays** who held a "Re-Gift It" drive in their office by collecting new items we can provide to individuals living in our shelters for their birthday or on a special holiday.

**THANK YOU!**

## OPERATION BACKPACK® 2018 CALL FOR SPONSORS!



The success of Operation Backpack® is 100% dependent on support from the community. "Success" is measured by whether or not we are able to give every child living in shelter who needs one, a full backpack in time for the first day of school.

Each year we must raise funds and secure major in-kind donations if Operation Backpack® is to turn no child away. This year, with family homelessness at an all-time high, we anticipate requests for over 18,000

backpacks so consider stepping up now to become an Official Sponsor.

This **video** gives you a glimpse into the campaign and talks about Official Sponsorship and the benefits (based on level of sponsorship) including:

- Recognition in official press releases
- Invitation to select media and other special events
- Logo placement on select out-of-home and print marketing material
- Exclusive volunteer shifts during "Sort Week"

Also, keep an eye out for our **new ad** that feature the logos of our confirmed sponsors, now appearing in **CMT Group** taxicabs, donated by our dedicated friend and partner **Tom Haymond**. If you can, consider becoming a Sponsor and we will add your logo to that video!

Contact **Rachel Weinstein**, Operation Backpack<sup>®</sup> Founder, for more details on Official Sponsorship.



### May Volunteer Opportunities

This **Mother's Day**, we'd like to acknowledge all the women living in shelters with their children. In most instances any "luxuries" these mothers, grandmothers, aunts can afford go to the children, with little left for themselves.

Hold a drive in your office to collect special items like perfume, purses, or makeup sets, or dedicate an afternoon to creating Mother's Day cards with empowering messages of appreciation for these women who try everyday to keep their families feeling safe and cared for.

**Memorial Day** is May 28, when we remember those who gave their lives in service to their country. Consider hosting a special luncheon at one of our veterans residences to help them honor their fellow servicemen and women who made the ultimate sacrifice.

[See More Volunteer Opportunities Here](#)



### Supply Lists Updated for Operation Backpack<sup>®</sup> 2018!

The backpacks we give to children living in NYC's homeless shelters through Operation Backpack<sup>®</sup> include supplies that are grade-specific. One size does *not* fit all when it comes to our backpacks. For instance, in addition to all the usual supplies, high school students receive a dictionary, USB flash drive and scientific calculator, while the middle school students get a regular calculator and geometry kit along with a flash drive.

We have updated our four lists of supplies for the 2018 campaign based on recommendations from the NYC Department of Education and research on what the students are required to bring to school.

Research shows - and we hear it from teachers, parents, and shelter staff routinely - that having a full complement of school supplies plays a role in higher rates of homework completion and school attendance. Let's make sure these kids are prepared!

[2018 Supply Lists Here](#)

## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: NEW YORK LIFE

New York Life and the New York Life Foundation have been dedicated champions of Volunteers of America-Greater New York for years and they are always finding new and creative ways to engage with us.

Just last month, they donated 4,000 filled Easter eggs so that the children in all of our shelters could experience the joy of an Easter egg hunt, just like any other child might. During the holidays our younger clients enjoyed stockings full of goodies while our older adults, with no involved family of their own, received beautifully wrapped gifts.

The New York Life Foundation encourages and rewards their employees' volunteerism by awarding grants to the organizations at which they volunteer based on the number of volunteer hours.

Thank you New York Life!



## LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW VOA HELPS: OUR EARLY LEARNING CENTERS

April is National Autism Awareness Month - a month that promotes awareness, understanding, and inclusion of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). One of the most prevalent developmental disabilities, ASD occurs in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. The



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that about 1 in 68 children are on the Autism Spectrum. This month is dedicated to assuring that each person with ASD is provided the opportunity to achieve the highest possible quality of life.

The goal of Autism Awareness Month mirrors the same vision we share at our two early learning centers in Staten Island and the South Bronx. These programs serve nearly 300 preschoolers, most with developmental delays, and provide special education and therapy services in order to prepare them for school-age services in less restrictive settings.

At our early learning centers we encourage the early screening and evaluation of suspected developmental delays, including ASD, in order to provide the appropriate education and services to children. Early intervention has been shown to increase the probability of these children leading more productive and inclusive lives.

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### To learn more, contact:

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