

A.J. O'Connor Associates assisted in making Backpack Gifts Sets for Displaced Migrant Children

By Frank Cahill - Sep 17, 2018

PARSIPPANY — More than 100 employees in four NY and NJ-based companies decorated and stuffed Backpack Gift Bundles recently for 60 displaced immigrant children separated from their parents at the US Mexico border.



Provided by Caring Capital, NJ's only charitable team-building enterprise that offers custom kits to make and donate, the Backpacks gave children their only means of carrying their few belongings. After Caring Capital President Susie Schub learned that Lutheran Social Services of New York (LSSNY) was housing some of the 2,500 displaced children, she contacted Executive Director Damyn Kelly. He explained that children arrive with no belongings and would benefit from backpacks. He noted that as each child reaches LSSNY, s/he receives medical, dental, and mental health care, plus safe housing. Staff search then for each child's family. When Schub contacted Caring Capital clients, four responded immediately, setting up work-hour events in which employee volunteers could create the Backpacks. Using colorful fabrics and markers packed in each kit, employees decorated backpacks and matching baseball caps and journals. Companies also donated bilingual books, games, and gift cards.

Schub explained, "Most people wish to respond to an emergency but often don't know how. Caring Capital makes it easy for companies to help their employees help others. We provide ready-to-make gift kits, allowing employees to feel good about pitching in and helping companies show their commitment to service." As one client said, "Thanks for helping our employees feel they are making a difference in our world."

Among the corporate donors, A.J. O'Connor Associates, a human capital consulting firm in ParsIPPANY took part. According to Shannon O'Connor Bock, "We have a long history of supporting disadvantaged children in our community. When we heard about Caring Capital's goal, we didn't hesitate to participate. We hope the children will be reunited with their parents as a matter of urgency and that the Backpacks bring relief to them in the interim."

Caring Capital, launched in 2009, empowers corporate employees to connect, create, and celebrate the role they can play, helping neighbors in need. Caring Capital provides engaging project kits worldwide for employees to make and donate to nonprofit organizations. With 40 projects ranging from blanket and pillow sets to garden benches, Caring Capital has engaged 52,000 employees, who have donated gifts to roughly 120,000 children, families, seniors and service members. Corporate partners include American Express, Capital One, L'Oréal, Nestle, Novartis, Pepsi, Starbucks, Verizon, and Wyndham Worldwide.

Lutheran Social Services of New York, founded in 1886, is a nonprofit social service organization devoted to strengthening lives, families and communities. Lutheran Social Services of New York has developed a wide range of educational and community programs to assist people across New York to reach their full potential.

