

# **Project Cool for Back-to-School**



## **2011 ANNUAL REPORT**

Project Cool is a program of the  
Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness  
[www.homelessinfo.org](http://www.homelessinfo.org)

## Project Cool is about more than backpacks: A thank you note from Jenn and Cecelia

Dear Friends,

Thanks to you, Project Cool 2011 was a great success! We are proud to report that 1,792 students from pre-schoolers to high school seniors received full backpacks in time to start the new school year. Together volunteers, donors, and community partners made a real difference for each one of those children and youth.

A new backpack, a dozen unsharpened pencils, a fresh notebook - these simple items are at the heart of Project Cool. But Project Cool is about more than backpacks. Project Cool is about the promise and worth of every child, no matter where she does her homework, or where he sleeps at night. That's why we have distributed thousands of fliers for homeless students and parents about how to access needed support from school staff. Project Cool is also about knowing where to turn to get a child on a new bus route or signed up for free lunches. Kids whose families are going through homelessness need school to be a stable part of their lives. They should be able to walk into class prepared to learn and participate fully.

Project Cool has been an important part of both our lives for many years. We are deeply grateful for the chance to help lead it, and for the many special people who have come into our lives as a result. Now we are both moving on to new challenges. We're cheering on the next generation of people who will help shape Project Cool 2012 - we know it will be a good year.

Together we have put the tools of learning into the hands of thousands of girls and boys, young men and women. And that is Very Cool!

Thank you,

Jennifer Pargas and Cecelia Linsley  
Project Cool 2011 Co-Chairs

*Project Cool is a program of the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness (SKCCH). SKCCH works collaboratively to ensure the safety and survival of people who are homeless, and to end the crisis of homelessness in our region.*



## Thanks Danny! And, meet Ally!



Last August we welcomed our AmeriCorps VISTA member Danny Meltzer. Danny helped SKCCH in many ways, and was an integral part of Project Cool 2011. His good nature and excellent problem-solving and coordination skills were invaluable. We will miss Danny and wish him the best as he sets out on his next adventure. Danny stayed to help us welcome new AmeriCorps VISTA member Ally Seidel to the Project Cool team! Ally comes to us fresh out of college, with a lot of enthusiasm and ideas. She has a special interest in immigrants' rights, and will be helping to support SKCCH's committees of service providers working with homeless Youth and Young Adults, and with Families with Children. She is a wonderful addition and we know that she will help make Project

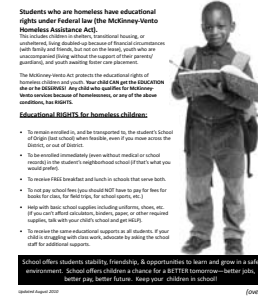
Cool 2012 a joyful success! Ally can be reached at (206) 357-3149 or at [ally@homelessinfo.org](mailto:ally@homelessinfo.org).



Jenn Pargas and Cecelia Linsley

## Children without housing have educational rights!

**"I want to stay in school!"**



Imagine trying to do homework when your family is living in a van. Or, think about sitting in class hungry because your family may not be able to afford food. Not having a stable home often leads to disrupted schooling. Many of these issues are addressed in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, an important federal law enacted in 1987. McKinney-Vento, in addition to establishing services and programs for people who are homeless, spells out specific requirements and rights regarding education for homeless students.



Every school district in the United States must appoint a Homeless Education Liaison to help homeless students access the supports and services they need. Students who are homeless should be able to enroll in the local public school immediately upon request, without waiting for medical or school records. They have the right to receive free breakfast and lunch in schools that serve both, and to not pay school fees such as for books for class or for field trips.

Inside every Project Cool backpack is a special fact sheet prepared by the Coalition on Homelessness. The fact sheet explains homeless students' educational rights in simple language, and provides contact information for Homeless Education Liaisons in all King County School Districts. You can download the fact sheet at [www.homelessinfo.org](http://www.homelessinfo.org).



## Children feel the stress of being homeless

Children whose families are homeless face challenges that no child should have to deal with. Imagine not knowing where your family will be staying from night to night, or whether your family will be able to afford groceries this week. Parents try hard to protect their children, but uncertainty and instability go hand in hand with homelessness, and all members of a family experience the strain. The National Center on Family Homelessness reports that family stress during times of homelessness is not lost on children. In fact:

- **74% of children of families that are homeless worry that they will not have a place to live**
- **58% worry they will have no place to sleep**
- **87% worry something bad will happen to their family.**

With all this stress and uncertainty, it is nice for families to have one less worry. By providing a sturdy backpack and new school supplies to a child experiencing homelessness, Project Cool takes the financial burden of purchasing school supplies out of the equation. By making sure that parents, students, and the social workers helping them all know about how schools can support students who are homeless, we help make school a stable and positive part of a child's daily life.

### Zip Codes Served by Project Cool 2011

98001	98035	98112
98002	98038	98115
98003	98042	98117
98004	98045	98118
98007	98052	98119
98008	98053	98122
98011	98055	98125
98014	98056	98133
98019	98057	98144
98022	98059	98146
98023	98065	98168
98024	98092	98177
98027	98101	98178
98028	98103	98188
98030	98104	98190
98031	98106	98198
98032	98108	99178
98033	98109	

## 2011 Project Cool Agencies and Representatives

1,792 homeless children and youth who were involved in programs at the following agencies received new backpacks filled with school supplies. Each agency contributed in critically important ways by gathering supplies, donations, or volunteers. A special thank you to all of our exceptional contacts!

### Catholic Community Services

Kristina Grotts  
Elissa Knight  
Gillian Parke

### Compass Housing Alliance

Angel Berry  
Rovenna James

### Consejo

Mayra Giles  
Debora Walling

### Eastside Domestic Violence Program

Edi Flores  
Chelle Hunsinger

### First Place School

Dara Craven  
Joyce Scoggins

### Hopelink

Christy Becker  
Misty Cavit  
Katie Lightner

### Homestep (Compass Housing Alliance)

Fumi Watanabe

### International District Housing Alliance

Chris Anne Abad  
Rita Castro

### Kiwanis Club

Henry Nelson

### Low Income Housing Institute

Colby Bradley  
Emilie Buter  
Jessica Jacobson

### Multi-Service Center

Tammy Money

### Salvation Army

Silinda Conn  
Heidi Sandgren  
Talya Silver  
Cassandra Simon

### Solid Ground

Marci Creamer  
Symone Edwards  
Darlene Finney  
Victoria Meissner  
Michelle Valdez

### St. Stephen Housing Association

Ann Allen  
Laura Cordle

### Vision House

Anne Snook  
Michelle Warsing

### Way Back Inn

Dorothy Francis  
Tonya Ward

### Wellspring Family Services

Cynthia Cantrill  
Marge Morrison  
Derek Taylor

### YMCA

Jarred Lathrop  
Jared Skretvedt

### YWCA

Jeanice Hardy  
Nichelle Hilton



## How many people are homeless in King County?

**At least 8,824 people were counted as homeless during our 2011 One Night Count**

Every January, the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness (SKCCH) organizes hundreds of volunteers for a Street Count to document the number of people who are homeless and sleeping outside. On the same night, emergency shelters and transitional housing programs report how many people are staying with them. Together, these two numbers give us the One Night Count: a snapshot of how many people are homeless in King County on one winter night.

We know that during the early hours of January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011:

- At least 8,824 people were homeless in King County
- At least 2,442 of them spent the night outdoors or in places not meant as shelter, such as cars or tents
- 6,382 people stayed in shelters or transitional housing programs, including 1,023 families with children

## Hundreds of families are safe inside each night – but many are turned away for lack of space.

Hundreds of homeless families throughout King County find safety and help at shelters and transitional housing programs. But most programs are full, which forces staff to turn families away. Sometimes it takes days, weeks, or longer for a family to find a stable, safe place to stay. SKCCH member organizations wanted to document that there are many more families who need shelter than there is room. Out of this grew the idea for a 24-hour “Family Turn Away Survey.” **The 2011 Survey showed us that 141 families (at least 253 children and 177 adults) called seeking shelter during one day and night last January, and could not find it.**

**Did You Know?** Homeless children are sick four times more often than other children. They experience four times as many respiratory infections, five times as many gastrointestinal problems, and two times as many ear infections, reports the National Center on Family Homelessness. Learn more at [www.familyhomelessness.com](http://www.familyhomelessness.com)

## Volunteer Spotlight: Joyce Scoggins



Joyce Scoggins of the First Place School has volunteered with Project Cool for over 3 years. She always brings energy, creativity, and drive to the project. This year Joyce organized the collection of hundreds of quality picture books through several organizations. Nearly 300 pre-school aged children received Project Cool ‘goody bags’ this fall, containing classics such as *Go Train Go* and *Clifford the Big Red Dog*. Here are a few words

from Joyce about what Project Cool means to her, as well as to the students at First Place School:

*“I have been with First Place for nine-and-a-half years and Project Cool has been a part of our agency for many years. . . .Project Cool is vital to the success of our agency. Many of our parents are not able to provide backpacks and school supplies for their children. . . .Every year I hear, ‘Ms Joyce, when are we getting our backpacks?’ They look forward to getting them. The backpacks are of high quality and the school supplies are plentiful. Our students carry them with pride.”*

## Amazing Volunteers A BIG thank you to our lovely volunteers. You ARE Project Cool!

Chris Anne Abad  
Aurelia Arnett  
Stephanie Bauler  
Kendra Belknap  
Angel Berry  
Ernie Bird  
Emilie Buter  
Rita Castro  
Misty Cavit  
Mitch Chaires  
David Clark  
Joe Clausen  
Roynerah Clewis  
Dara Craven  
Marci Creamer  
Brittany Davis  
Erin Densley  
Symone Edwards  
Annie Feng  
Edi Flores  
Dorothy Francis  
Vern Francis  
David Gaines  
Glenn Getscher  
Mayra Giles  
Shawn Hargreaves  
Kimberly Heinrich  
Jody Hepburn  
Alison Holmes  
Darien Holmes  
Bonnie Hoversland  
Westin Hoversland  
Emily Huynh  
Jessica Jacobson  
Rovenna James  
Keaylah Johnson  
Tracy Jones  
King County Nurses Association

Mike LaFranchi  
Sophia Latino  
Kathy Lewis  
Katie Lightner  
Stacey Marron and Natalie  
Linda Maser  
Victoria Meissner  
Maia Mercer  
Tammy Money  
Irene Monson  
Henry Nelson  
Helen Nguyen  
Stephanie Page  
Rebecca Rayner  
Laura Reardon  
Susan Robinson  
Julyn Robinson  
Emily Robinson  
Abbie Robinson  
Rebecca Robinson  
Steve Robinson  
Lenna Rogel  
Heidi Sandgren  
Joyce Scoggins  
Kaitlyn Scott  
Katy Showalter  
Rita Silva-Ponds  
Cassandra Simon  
Dana Surman  
Linda Tappan  
Erika Tiede  
Sue Vermeulen  
Debora Walling  
Michelle Warsing  
West Seattle Kiwanis  
Corryn Wetzel  
Claude Wetzel  
Rose Williamson

Thank you to YMCA staff Jared Skretvedt, David Elliott, Mirsada Kulovac, and Jenny Blenko, and to the seven YMCA youth volunteers!

**Special thanks to Tammy Money, Dorothy Francis, and Vern Francis, who stepped up and volunteered extra time to help the co-chairs make Project Cool 2011 possible.**

## We thank the following generous donors to Project Cool 2011

ACLU of Washington (Eric Nygren)  
 Adobe Systems Incorporated  
 Alan M Munk, DDS  
 Emmy Alvarez  
 Argosy Cruises  
 Matthew Burnett and Darla Rhodes  
 Steve Buzzard  
 Carney Badley Spellman, P.S. (Chris Williams)  
 Chihak and Gustad, LLC (Kevin Bender)  
 ChildCare Resources  
 COMgroup Inc (Kate Kochanasz)  
 Compass Housing Alliance – Hygiene Center  
 Compass Housing Alliance – Renton Vets Center  
 Complete Office (Rick Israel)  
 Jerry Conrath and Sue Cook  
 Laura Coy  
 Crisis Clinic (Ryan Peterson and Stephanie Riedl)

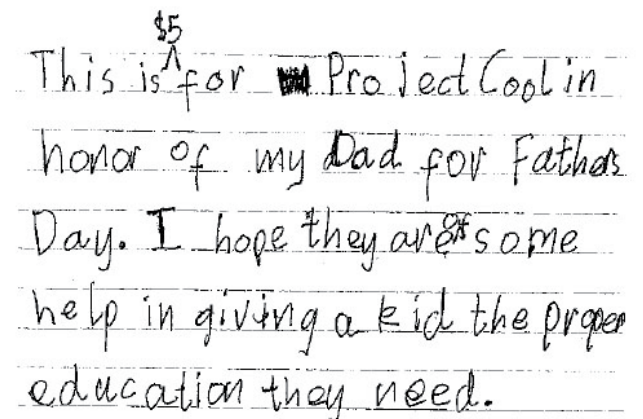
Liliana Cuerpo  
 Martha Dilts and Edward Schumacher  
 Ellen Reh, DDS (Stacy McIvor)  
 Marion Fisher  
 Kathryn Flores and Lynn Gordon  
 William Fuller  
 Shawn Hargreaves  
 Andy and Carol Harris  
 Polly Jirkovsky (Donation in Honor of Cindy Jirkovsky)  
 Tracy Jones  
 Kent Fire Department (Melanie Taylor)  
 Melinda Lloyd  
 Roberta Lord  
 Mary Anne Mercer  
 Elizabeth Miller Javor  
 Gary and Mary Moore  
 Henry Morkunas  
 Henry Nelson  
 Carol Noteboom  
 Virginia Ogle

Olympus Press (Glenn Blue)  
 Plymouth Housing Group  
 Administrative Office Team  
 Pruningman.com (Mike King)  
 Kim Rachmeler  
 Deborah Raney  
 Safeway  
 Kim Sather  
 Frances and Thomas Scheidel  
 Edward and Cheryl Seaborn  
 Seattle Times Fund for the Needy (Patty Delaney)  
 Karen Sellers  
 Seward Park Family Dental (Dr. Lin)  
 Katie Talcott  
 ThyssenKrupp Aerospace (Doug Penner, Jennifer Kautz)  
 University of Washington Suzzalo Library (Jun y-Ho Ryu)  
 Nancy Utter  
 Dana Visser  
 Suzanne Walker  
 Walmart  
 Katherine Warner  
 Washington Delta Dental Service Foundation (Heather Knaplund)  
 Wedgewood Dental Center (Emily Shackelton)  
 Amy Weinstein and Crasta Yo  
 Corryn Wetzel  
 Windermere Real Estate Foundation Fund (Mike Woods)  
 Terrie Yaffe  
 Zion Lutheran Church (Betty McNeely)



## A perfect gift for Father's Day

We received this charming note from a young anonymous donor in honor of his or her father. Father's Day, Mother's Day, birthdays, or other days of celebration are all good occasions to honor someone who helped you learn and grow. When you honor a parent, child, teacher, or mentor with a gift to Project Cool, we will send a special acknowledgment card. Just include the person's name and address, and we'll let them know they've inspired you to help make sure that homeless children around King County receive the education they need.



## Local Business Partnerships are VERY Cool!



With nearly 2,000 backpacks to fill, we stretch every donated dollar by purchasing certain supplies in bulk. We'd like to introduce you to several special people and local businesses who partner with Project Cool faithfully. Without these behind-the-scenes professionals, Project Cool just wouldn't be possible. These community businesses and partners deserve special mention for their critical support.

### University Book Store, Seattle

University Book Store employees Susan Esayian and Anne Feurer have been involved with Project Cool for many years. They negotiated great discount prices for pens, erasers, colored pencils, markers, and notebooks this year. We ordered over 4,700 items through the University Book Store. Thank you, Susan and Anne, for all of your hard work, and for being a pleasure to partner with.

### Complete Office, Seattle

Rick Israel coordinated significant discounts on our order of over 2,000 units of notebook paper and binders, and donated much needed office supplies to Project Cool. Thank you, Rick!

### Kimmel Athletic Supply, Redmond

What's the first thing Project Cool has to order every year? Backpacks for the big kids and smaller bags for the youngsters! Every year, as soon as there are enough funds in the Project Cool account, we contact Smitty Smith at Kimmel Athletic Supply. Smitty makes sure that Project Cool can purchase high quality backpacks at a good price. This year, he filled our order for 292 cinch packs and 1,350 backpacks at a significantly reduced price, and got us free shipping! Smitty has helped Project Cool for many years. We deeply appreciate him, and our partnership with Kimmel Athletic Supply.

## Speaking up to keep homeless kids in school

Staff at many SKCCH member agencies spend significant time advocating for the educational rights of homeless students. They collaborate with local schools to support homeless families with children and to ensure that these children have the services they need to receive a proper education. Students who are homeless have the right to be immediately enrolled into a local public school, even if they are missing certain documentation at registration. However, confusion and misinformation about this and other rights sometimes delays or disrupts a homeless student's enrollment. Marilyn Cormier with Valley Cities Counseling and Consultation recently worked with a family staying in a local shelter, whom she called the Smiths. Mrs. Smith attempted to enroll her grandson and granddaughter at the start of the school year, but while the school enrolled one child, administrators insisted on waiting for paperwork from the little girl's previous school. Staff at the previous school said that they had sent the paperwork, but nobody could find it.

In fact, the McKinney-Vento Law specifies that students who are homeless have the right to be enrolled immediately, so that they do not miss school. In this case, school staff should have enrolled brother and sister at the same time.

Marilynn knew that this wasn't right. She spoke with school staff and suggested that Mrs. Smith go to the school in person to ask them to enroll her granddaughter right away. She also asked for help from the Homeless Education Office at the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in Olympia. In the end, things were sorted out. But Mrs. Smith's granddaughter missed the first three days of the school year, an unnecessary price for a child to pay for adults not knowing about a law designed to make it easier, not harder, for homeless students to be in school.

Because of advocates like Marilyn, and grandparents like Mrs. Smith, more and more families, students, and school staff are learning about the rights of homeless students, and more homeless children are receiving the support and education they need.

## Special Contributors

Special thanks to the people and organizations whose contributions were above and beyond:

- **Compass Housing Alliance** provided us with access to the Columbia City Church of Hope for sorting supplies and packing backpacks as well as for storage during the coming year, and **Reverend Darla DeFrance** helped orient us to the space and provided assistance with many of the details. Compass also donated the talents of **Lindsey Lund** for the design of this report.
- **Betty McNeely** and **Zion Lutheran Church** purchased and filled 150 backpacks for us, as well as provided extra school supplies for the goody bags!
- **Washington Delta Dental Service Foundation** donated 432 toothbrushes. Thank you to **Heather Knaplund** for coordinating this effort!
- **Kent Fire Department** contributed 300 9-1-1 coloring books and 250 Kent Fire Department pencils.
- **Olympus Press** donated 1,180 binders! Thanks to **Glenn Blue** for helping to set this up.
- **TeenLink/Crisis Clinic** donated 800 copies of *Where to Turn for Teens* for inclusion in the backpacks.
- **Walmart** provided us with gift cards for our last minute school supplies shopping.
- **Corryn Wetzel** started volunteering with Project Cool years ago as part of a service project in middle school. She continues to help each year by coordinating donation and supply drives.

Readers of *The Seattle Times*, through the Seattle Times Fund for the Needy, donated \$19,896.

## Corporate Sponsors

Several community-oriented businesses sponsored Project Cool 2011 by donating generously to help us purchase needed supplies in bulk and at a discount. Their leadership support was invaluable, and on behalf of the 1,792 youngsters who started the school year off right because of these sponsorships, we thank you!

**Carney Badley Spellman, P.S.**  
**ThyssenKrupp Aerospace**

**Walmart**  
**Chihak and Gustad, LLC**

Maybe YOUR business would like to be a Project Cool 2012 sponsor! We'd love to talk with you about sponsorship levels, and how employees can get involved through supply drives and volunteer opportunities. Please call (206) 357.3149 or email [projectcool@homelessinfo.org](mailto:projectcool@homelessinfo.org).

## How can I help Project Cool?

Contributing money is the most flexible way you can help Project Cool. This increases Project Cool's purchasing power by allowing us to buy needed supplies in bulk and at a discount.

### Mail donations to:

Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness  
Project Cool  
77 South Washington Street  
Seattle, WA 98104

### Donate securely online at:

[www.homelessinfo.org](http://www.homelessinfo.org)

Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by the law.

### For more information: (206) 357.3149

[projectcool@homelessinfo.org](mailto:projectcool@homelessinfo.org)

[www.homelessinfo.org](http://www.homelessinfo.org)



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Thanks for helping to produce the report:

Lindsey Lund, Compass Housing Alliance  
Mike Buchman, Solid Ground



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