

## **Clothes Closet** **Process**

Below is a suggested process list for churches planning to launch an in-school Clothes Closet for a public school. It's helpful to start initial planning two or three months before the launch date of the Clothes Closet to allow time for volunteer recruiting, procurement and setup.

1. Work through the Be|Undivided "Prelaunch Planning" page (see *Strategic Planning*).
2. Meet with school contacts, working with them to find out their needs and how your resources and vision line up with theirs.
3. Start to fill key volunteer roles, beginning with the Clothes Closet Director. The volunteer recruiting and training process will be an ongoing one parallel with all other steps.
4. Meet with church, Procurement Team (see *Strategic Planning for Volunteer Organization* document) and volunteers to develop a plan for stocking the closet.
5. Determine what resources will be required for hanging, shelving and otherwise storing clothing.
6. Determine what clothes donation processing will look like. (See our sample Clothes Donation Processing document under Clothes Closet General Information and Resources.)
7. Develop partnerships with third parties for any desired donations, volunteers, connections, etc.
8. Begin resource procurement.
9. Set up the Clothes Closet location.
10. Meet with school contacts again, finalizing rules and any referral requirements, and determine how communication with students about the Clothes Closet will be established.
11. Open Clothes Closet with a limited referral scope for two or three weeks, in order to work out any potential problems.
12. After the timespan allotted for Step 11, communicate Clothes Closet hours to the broader student community.
13. Open for business!
14. Maintain a clear communication cycle with the school about availability, hours, problems, student referrals, etc.

## **Clothes Closet**

### **Materials List**

Below are some ideas of goods and equipment that you may want to have available for your Clothes Closet. Note that many, but not all, of the items are things that church members and the community could donate from their own closets and homes. We recommend establishing a permanent donation site at your church for this purpose.

- Storage shelves to keep the clothes clean and organized
- Storage bins to organize smaller items such as socks and underwear
- Hangers
- Hanging racks or bars
- Easy-to-read labels/signs for organization and customer ease (multilingual if applicable)
- Curtains for a dressing room
- Clothing types:
  - Socks
  - Underwear
  - Shirts
  - Pants
  - Sportswear
  - Shoes
  - Coats and jackets
  - Sweatshirts
  - Hats and gloves
  - Backpacks
  - "Interview" clothes
- Hygiene products:
  - Soap
  - Deodorant
  - Toothbrushes
  - Toothpaste
  - Dental floss
  - Shampoo and conditioner
  - Razors
  - Shaving cream
  - Lotion
  - Diapers
  - Baby wipes
  - Feminine products
  - Toilet paper
  - Detergent
- Handcart for transporting deliveries
- Bags for customers to transport delicate items they receive
- Access to a washing machine and dryer

## **Clothes Closet** **Volunteer Positions**

### **Clothes Closet Director**

- Wants to alleviate the burden on schools and students, and to make things run smoothly to build an efficient and effective program.
- Duties:
  - Primary point of communication for the school's Site Coordinator re: the Clothes Closet
  - Works with the Site Coordinator to promote the Clothes Closet within the school, and to advertise volunteer and donation opportunities to the church
  - Depending on volunteer staffing structure, oversees and supports the work of the Clothes Closet's Volunteer Coordinator and Inventory Coordinator
  - Is onsite during open hours until trusted volunteers are trained to manage things smoothly on their own
  - Works with the Site Coordinator to make sure the school stays updated and comfortable about this aspect of the partnership
  - Carries out the roles of the Volunteer Coordinator and Inventory Coordinator (below), if it is a combined position
- Skills needed:
  - Organization
  - Leadership
  - Inspiration
  - Positivity
- Hours required:
  - 10-15 hours/week (more at startup)

### **Volunteer Coordinator (optional position, depending on the scope of work; duties may be done by Clothes Closet Director)**

- Wants to support the Clothes Closet and volunteers, and make things run smoothly with volunteer coordination in the project.
- Duties:
  - Works with Clothes Closet Director to recruit and train volunteers
  - Ensures that onsite volunteers have had a background check run through the school
  - Manages the volunteer schedule
  - Makes sure that all volunteer timeslots are filled
- Skills needed:
  - Organization

- Leadership
- Inspiration
- Positivity
- Hours required:
  - 5-10 hours/week (more at startup)

**Inventory Coordinator (optional position, depending on the scope of work; duties may be performed by Clothes Closet Director)**

- Wants to support the Clothes Closet and volunteers, and make things run smoothly with inventory to create efficiency in the project.
- Duties:
  - Makes sure there are procurement people gathering supplies needed
  - Makes lists of needed items for shoppers and procurement people to obtain or advertise for
- Skills needed:
  - Organization
  - Leadership
  - Positivity
- Hours required:
  - 5-10 hours/week (more at startup)

**Open-Hours Volunteers**

- Wants to help connect with and serve the people using the Clothes Closet.
- Duties:
  - Is onsite during certain shifts
  - Helps students find the supplies that they need
  - Helps make the people visiting the closet feel comfortable
  - Stocks new deliveries
  - Makes sure the closet stays clean and in proper condition
- Skills needed:
  - Good with people
  - Welcoming
  - Willing to serve whoever visits the closet
  - Nonjudgmental
  - Selfless
  - Organization
- Hours required:
  - 2-4 hours/week

**Off-Hours Volunteers**

- Wants to provide students the right clothes in the right condition.
- Duties:

- Sorts through deliveries; donates unusable items and collects appropriate items
- Washes and dries donated clothes
- Skills needed:
  - Knowledge of products offered
  - Ability to do laundry (access to a washer and dryer)
- Hours required:
  - Varies depending on donations

**Procurement Team**

The Procurement Team (see “Strategic Planning” for Volunteer Organization document) should be contacted and available to help obtain donations of equipment, clothes, hygiene products, etc.

**Transportation Team**

The Transportation Team (see “Strategic Planning” for Volunteer Organization document) should be contacted and available to help transport equipment, clothing and other goods as needed.

## Clothes Closet

### Additional Requirements

- **Financial:** The financial needs will be determined by whom you choose to serve (students, families, etc.) and how large the demand is in your area. How do we meet the financial needs of running a Clothes Closet without being a drain on the church?
  - Procurement from businesses
  - Procurement from service organizations
  - Procurement from church attendees through donations
  - Grants
  - See "Partnerships" section below
- **Facilities:** There are some realistic, nonnegotiable needs for space.
  - The Clothes Closet: Is there an unused room or multiuse room that could be used, or an offsite location close? Are you going to need electricity for washers and dryers? Some schools might even have an underused shop building or similar space.
    - An onsite location is great. It provides easy access for students and staff. There may be access and security issues. When can you get into the building, and who else has access?
    - Offsite locations give greater flexibility for volunteers, but limit student access.
  - Storage: With different sizes, genders and seasons of clothing, storage can be problematic. An easy system for volunteers and clients to get to what they need is a must.
    - Separate by gender. This immediately cuts out half of the guessing.
    - Separate by clothing type. Providing a store-like experience adds dignity to their experience.
    - Organize by size. A little extra work to organize the sizes greatly limits the amount of time they have to spend "shopping."
    - Store out-of-season clothes. Winter coats just get in the way during the summer. Can you find an area to neatly store unneeded clothes in an organized way? Larger, labeled storage bins on shelves can accomplish this goal while providing ease of access when the season changes.
- **Transportation:** Whenever you are providing a product to customers, you have to transport that product. How will you get the supplies to your location?
  - Delivery: Some partner organizations may deliver to your location.
  - Pickup: If your church or other organizations you partner with collect supplies, you can create easy volunteer opportunities by having a team who drives, when needed, to where the donations

are being collected and deliver them to your site. (See Volunteer Organization document under "Process.")

- **Purchasing:** If you have collected money or gift cards to purchase supplies, you can create another easy volunteer opportunity by having a team go shopping and deliver the supplies to your location.
- **Partnerships:** Many organizations have a heart to clothe students and their families. Partnerships multiply your ability to serve. Who can you partner with?
  - Local businesses for donations
  - Local clothing stores
  - Clubs (Rotary, Elks, etc.)
  - Other churches
  - PTA

## Clothes Closet

### General Information & Resources

#### General Considerations

- **Summer/winter breaks:**
  - Will you offer service when the school is on a break? Are facilities available?
- **Important relationships to build:**
  - Social services director
  - Counselors
  - Principal
  - Custodian
  - Teachers and others referring students to the closet
  - Office staff
- **Distribution:**
  - Who gets supplies? This can largely be determined by the quantity you have available and the limits the school may have. Here are some ideas:
    - Any student can come a certain number of times a year
    - A teacher or staff member can refer any student
    - Any student on the free or reduced lunch program
    - Any student
    - Any family with school-age children in the district
  - When can supplies be distributed? This is largely determined by your volunteer availability, clothing availability and school rules. Here are some ideas:
    - During school hours
    - After or before school
    - Certain days a week or month
- **Deciding open hours:**
  - Determine student needs:
    - Do students need clothes during school hours? This could be because of gym needs or inappropriate clothing. Could a counselor have access for these times, or will demand be high enough to merit volunteers being available?
    - If the closet is open after school, how do you get supplies to students who are taking a bus home?
  - Determine school needs:
    - Does the school have rules on when students can get supplies? This is a question your school contact can answer.
  - Determine volunteer availability:

- When can you mobilize volunteers? This will determine if you can have availability before, during or after school.
- **Making adjustments for school rules, desires and requests:**
  - As the school sees the potential in what you are offering, they may request more options. It's important to manage that relationship by saying "yes" when you can and knowing your limitations. Every school is different, and every expression of a church–school partnership is different. Keep focused on your mission while being flexible on how to get there, and keep communication flowing.
  - As you implement new strategies, the school may see new liabilities. Treat all school input with respect, and allow it to inform planning. Creative thinking helps here. For instance, if there is a problem with students missing class to access the closet, you could limit availability during class to students who have a pass.
- **Communicating to students:** How will students know that you are there? Here are some ideas to talk through with your school contact:
  - School-wide announcements
  - Teacher/staff referral
  - Counselor referral
  - Letter home to parents (all parents or free/reduced lunch program participants)
  - Word of mouth

**Mistakes to Avoid**

- **Stocking the student Clothes Closet without considering student fashion:** *Make sure that the inventory is filled with items students would take pride in wearing.*
- **Offering a limited variety of sizes:** *Students, just like the general population, come in all sizes.*
- **Offering unlaundered or tattered clothing:** *Students will feel unvalued if offered dirty or ripped clothing.*
- **Offering used delicate items such as socks, underwear, etc.:** *No one wants to wear someone else's used undergarments; buy new.*

**Resources Below**

Clothes Donation Processing Sample  
 Sample Donation Receipt

## **CLOTHES DONATION PROCESSING (SAMPLE)** From Donation Site to Clothes Closet

Clothes arrive at donation site.



Clothes are sorted by volunteers at the weekly sorting party.



Clothes destined for the Clothes Closet go home with volunteers for laundering.



Clothes deemed inappropriate or inadequate for the Clothes Closet get transported to a Goodwill or Salvation Army donation site.



Laundered clothes get transported to the Clothes Closet.



Clothes are sorted, folded and hung.

# Roosevelt High School

**Thank you for your generous donation  
in support of Roosevelt High School!**  
No goods or services were received in exchange for this donation.  
Donated items were not reimbursed.

NAME OF DONOR: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF CONTRIBUTION: \_\_\_\_\_

*DONOR ESTIMATION OF THE FAIR MARKET VALUE OF GOODS:*

**DESCRIPTION OF GOODS:**

**ESTIMATED VALUE:**

_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____

**TOTAL VALUE:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Roosevelt High School Tax ID #: [REDACTED]**

For further information, please contact [REDACTED] at (503) [REDACTED]