

## ANGEL CARTS

### The Story

I noticed a shift in need with our back-to-school school supply efforts this year. With ALL students being back at school face-to-face, Army of Angels began receiving more requests for help with school supplies AT school, not at home.

Not too long after school started, a student came to frustrated, angry, and teary eyed, for a pair of earbuds needed to participate in the days lesson in his 3<sup>rd</sup> period class. Without this pair of earbuds he couldn't participate and would have to take a zero for the class grade that day. He had known that he needed earbuds for the class since the first day of school, but for whatever reason, he didn't have them. I went into my storage closet at Winter Park HS, and grabbed the earbuds that had been left over from the school supply drive the prior month. I gave him all 5 pairs and told him to give one to each person in the class who didn't have any and if there were any left over then give the rest to the teacher for anyone in her other classes who didn't have a pair.

In this moment I thought about my children, and all children. I thought how very possible it would have been for this to happen to any of Craig and my 5 children, even with us both working in schools, even with us listening to every connect ed message and every newsletter and knowing how to check their grades on Skyward. Life is busy. For everyone. Is it ultimately my responsibility to make sure my children have their school supplies? Yes. But there are dozens of other reasons why they might not have them when and where they need them. When I asked the student the next day if he needed other supplies or if there was anything else I could help him with, he said, "No Ms. I had earbuds but I gave them to my friend yesterday morning because he really needed them."

So, I went back into my storage closet and got the small utility cart that our girls had used as a nightstand years ago. I rolled it out into the hall outside my office and started loading the remaining supplies.

- TI30Xa Calculators
- Pencils
- Pencil Sharpeners
- Highlighters
- Loose leaf paper
- Pens
- 2 pocket folders
- Notebooks
- Eraser caps
- Backpacks
- Earbuds

Then I sent an email to all of the students and told them if they needed a school supply, whether they were economically disadvantaged or not, they could take anything they needed anytime front the cart that would always be outside of my office (382), and I attached a picture. I noticed that when I stood outside in the hall during class exchange, nobody would take anything. So I started staying at my desk during class exchange, working, while watching out of the corner of my eye. I noticed students stop by

quietly and glance around to see who was looking and take something here and there. Then I had students email me and ask if there were backpacks on the cart and I told them there were so a few students came by and filled it up with more supplies. Within a week I had replenished the cart 3 times.

Shortly after the first week of the cart being outside my office, I was approached by one of our youth volunteers, an 11<sup>th</sup> grade student named Amelia Skena. Amelia was in the process of planning her “Take Action” project as one of the requirements for earning her Girl Scout Gold Award. She said she wanted to do a project that would support Army of Angels efforts and asked about our needs. I told her that with the response I have seen from the students with the school supply carts, I think we should consider establishing these Angel Carts and a system to keep them going over time, in every school and she started to develop her proposal. Amelia, and a small group of students, Rylee Perrault, Maggie Jones, Evan Fitzgerald, Alexis Quinn, and Avien Shaw, will be working on rolling out this initiative to any teacher at any OCPS school who would like to have an Angel Cart.

Students need supplies on the spot in the moment, when they are at school. It doesn't matter why a child doesn't have the supply, what matters is that they get it when they need it (at that moment) so they can be successful that very day in that very class. We want school to be a positive experience for all children. When a student goes to class and doesn't have a pencil, or the required notebook, or a calculator that they need, and they go without, while those around them carry on, the message received is that his/her needs don't matter. The rest of the world, the class, spins on as they go without. Teachers can't do it all. They can't be prepared with every supply at every moment on top of EVERYTHING else that is expected, required, and demanded of them by all stakeholders. At the same time, PTSAs can't do it all. Parents can't do it all. It's going to take an army to take care of our children.

Thank you to Jeannine Pugliese, Jennifer Parkis, Julie Friesl, Karin Banks, Kelsey Christmas, Leslie Taylor, Nicole Duff, Paula Berastegui, Stacey Cox, Tish Alessandro, Wendy Coomes, Amy Byrd, Courtney Noik at Contractors Construction and Connections, and Dean DePhillips at Pothole Heros, and ALL who contributed to our back-to-school supply drive in August. Because of you, many students have had what they needed, when they needed it. You took care of them regardless of their circumstances and you changed their experience at school that day. Carry on warriors, carry on!

## Details and Sign Up

### **Roles of each Angel**

#### Teacher -

- The teacher is the cart “custodian”.
- The teacher keeps the cart outside of their classroom door during school hours and locks it in their classroom at night.
- The teacher stores the reserve of donated supplies to replenish the cart and assigns a student(s) the task of refilling the cart when it gets low.

#### Support Person -

- The support person could be a staff member, Club Sponsor, PTSA representative, etc.
- Support person will monitor the cart and communicate with the teacher to find out what items are most in need.
- They will help make sure that donations are delivered to the teacher's classroom.
- The support person/club will communicate back to Army of Angels if there is a need, give feedback/suggestions.

### **Donations to the Angel Carts**

- Financial Donations
  - Money can be donated to the Angel Carts by going to our website under donate.
- In-Kind Donations
  - School supplies can also be donated directly to an Angel Cart at a specific school, by emailing the Support Person and Teacher. A full list of Support Person and Teacher for each school will be on our website under Angels Carts.
  - Donations can also be left at 1923 Summerfield Road, Winter Park, Florida 32792 with a note indicating what school they should be sent to. The Support Person will pick them up and get them to the Teacher.
- Receipts
  - Whether someone drops off their donation at a school or to Summerfield Road, the donor should fill out the In-Kind Donation form at [www.tinyurl.com/AOAinkinddonation](http://www.tinyurl.com/AOAinkinddonation) so we have a record of the donation and can issue a receipt.

### **More about the Take Action project**

Plan and implement an individual "Take Action" project that reaches beyond the Girl Scout organization and provides a sustainable, lasting benefit to the girl's larger community.

Once these steps have been met, girls use their vision for change to complete a service project that reaches beyond the Girl Scout organization and provides lasting benefit to the girl's larger community. It requires a minimum of 80 hours of work in planning and actually completing the project. All of these hours must be completed by the Awardee, and though it is encouraged that the girl use troop members and others from the community to help her, their time spent does not count towards her 80-hour requirement. Plans must be developed with the aid of an advisor, then a project proposal must be submitted and approved by the girl's local council before starting the project, and a final report submitted and approved after the project's completion.