

Media Release
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Help Aussie school kids in poverty get off to a flying start in 2019

Starting a new school year without the necessary items on their stationery list or the correct uniform can have a detrimental impact on a child's education potential.

Despite being one of the wealthiest countries in the world, 739,000 Australian children live below the poverty line.¹ Children who will return to school in 2019 without the essentials will be left feeling isolated and a target for ridicule and bullying.

Last year online charity GIVIT provided students returning to school with hundreds of essential items, including uniforms, bags, stationery items, iPads and tablets. This year the needs are great with many vulnerable families and rural families in drought-affected towns unable to provide the basics. Already GIVIT has requests for back to school needs valued at more than \$40,000 and the demand for help will continue to grow as the start to the school year approaches.

GIVIT's Back to School campaign matches the needs of our most underprivileged students with donors from communities across Australia, including remote and regional areas, who will help provide the vital education equipment these children need. Those children requiring assistance are identified by hundreds of GIVIT charity partners across the country.

GIVIT Founder and Director Juliette Wright said the aim of GIVIT's Back to School campaign was to ensure all Australian children, despite their financial situation, were able to walk into their classrooms feeling confident.

"Education is the key to breaking out of a cycle of disadvantage and putting a child on a path to a better life," she said. "One in six Australian children will start the 2019 school year lacking the basic education tools of textbooks, stationery or a uniform."¹

"Poverty affects every aspect of a child's life, particularly their education. Providing the necessary needs for a child to start school is a stepping stone to a brighter future. Kids who go to school hungry with their shoes falling apart and a uniform that doesn't fit, stand out. Kids don't want to stand out, they want to fit in."

GIVIT works with more than 2,450 charities nation-wide, ranging from The Salvation Army, Australian Red Cross and School of the Air to community groups and neighbourhood centres. For this campaign GIVIT is also working with school chaplains and principals to identify students in need.

Schools in the worst affected drought areas have become community support hubs with principals sharing with GIVIT stories of students' hardship, including the need to provide breakfast clubs and facilities for children to shower and wash uniforms because there's no running water at home.

One of the requests on GIVIT's website is for a mum from Gympie who is sole carer for four children with special needs as well as a foster child. The mum is distraught as she doesn't know how she will provide the children with all the book list items they need for three high schools and two primary schools. The high school lists cost around \$155 each.

Statistics show that children brought up in poverty are most often behind their classmates socially and academically when they begin school and by the time they turn 15 they are two to three years behind in reading and maths standards. ²

Education is a predictor of future employment, health and their contribution to society and their community. Children raised in poverty who fail to receive a basic education are unfairly represented in the criminal justice system.

While costs soar every year for stationery and uniforms, imagine the hardship for a struggling family trying to provide computers, laptops and iPads for children required in many classrooms.

Help turn around a vulnerable child's life with the gift of a stationery pack, a uniform, a bag, a pair of school shoes, or by contributing towards the cost of mandatory iPads and laptops.

To protect the dignity and privacy of the child in need, donors giving a gift through givit.org.au and the recipients always remain anonymous.

To get involved:

1: Go to GIVIT's Back to School page and click "donate here"

2: Choose an item request that touches your heart from the list and click "GIVIT" to offer your donation

3: Once approved, contact details between you and the charity are exchanged automatically

4: Arrange delivery of the item with the charity user behind the request

Alternatively if you can donate funds to help us purchase school supplies, IT equipment or uniforms please visit givit.org.au/donate-funds and select Back to School from the dropdown list.

One hundred per cent of funds received by GIVIT will be used to purchase these essential items from local retailers.

For more information or to arrange an interview, contact media@givit.org.au or call 0444 503 759

About GIVIT

GIVIT is a national online not-for-profit connecting those who need with those willing to give. Through its website givit.org.au, trusted Australian charities are supported as they request essential, quality items on behalf of their clients. GIVIT matches their needs with public and corporate generosity, facilitating quality goods to reach our most vulnerable, impoverished and marginalised individuals in a safe, easy and timely manner. Since establishment in 2009, more than 933,000 items have been donated via GIVIT to assist Australians in need. In 2011 GIVIT established its disaster recovery service following the Queensland floods and managed the donation of more than 18,000 items. Since then GIVIT has become the official partner of the Queensland Government managing offers of assistance after disasters on its behalf and most recently ensured that 91,860 items made their way to people in need after Tropical Cyclone Debbie in 2017. In 2015, GIVIT gained national attention with Founder and CEO Juliette Wright receiving Australia's Local Hero Award by the National Australia Day Council and inducted into the Australian Businesswomen's Network Hall of Fame. GIVIT also received a National Resilient Australia Award by Australia's Attorney-General for its disaster recovery service and The Australian National Innovation Challenge Award.