

Supplies, Clothes Help Make The Student

(NAPSA)—As children across the country start a new school year, it's important to realize that not every student has the school supplies he or she needs to succeed academically, or the clothing required to fit in and feel comfortable in a school setting.

Around the world, poverty prevents children from having these basic resources. Research shows that improving a child's self-esteem is a key component of improving that child's academic performance—and supplies and clothing are part of the solution.

Fortunately, one organization has undertaken to help as many children as possible start the school year on a positive note. The Back-To-School Project was designed by Operation Blessing International (OBI) to help make it possible for children to go to school without feeling ashamed of how they look or what they lack.

Since the launch of the Back-To-School project in 1984, more than 522,000 children across the United States have received clothing and school supplies.

"Providing an at-risk child with new clothes and school supplies is another step in instilling the confidence and self-esteem he or she needs to go to school," says Jodie Nelson, Director of Programs for Operation Blessing. "It prepares them to enter the academic year with a positive experience so they can focus on learning."

Both nationally and internationally, the program, through its network of volunteer outreach centers, provides new school clothes, supplies, access to education and, more importantly, self-esteem to children in grades K-12



New clothes and supplies help make the first day of school easier for children.

who would otherwise lack the resources to be prepared for school. This past year, OBI assisted more than 63,000 children in 32 U.S. cities and nine countries.

OBI distributes funds through its network of volunteer field representatives—known as outreach centers—who participate in the Back-To-School project. The outreach centers, in turn, work with churches, helping agencies and schools in their home communities to identify at-risk children who then receive assistance.

For more information about the Back-To-School project or other OBI programs, visit www.ob.org or write to Operation Blessing International Relief and Development Corp., 977 Centerville Tpke., Virginia Beach, VA 23463.