



Children proudly show off their new shoes

Acts of kindness

All across the country, every day, good people perform acts of kindness for strangers. Only rarely do they receive recognition for their selfless work. In our ongoing series, The ENQUIRER will put the spotlight on those who care enough to make life better for those around them.

Every kid needs SHOES THAT FIT

Charity provides 100,000 pairs of footwear a year to needy children

IT started with a small child crying in a schoolyard. When asked what was wrong, the boy told a teacher that his feet hurt. The youngster was

taken to the nurse's office – and what the nurse found broke her heart. The boy's parents had folded his toes under so his feet would fit in sneakers that were three sizes too small.



Roni Lomeli of Shoes That Fit

“They just couldn't afford to buy him a pair of sneakers in the right size,” explains Roni Lomeli, executive director of the charity Shoes That Fit.

The goal of the group is to start kids off on the right foot – so they can concentrate on their lessons and not their shameful shoes. They supply nearly 100,000 pairs of new shoes every year to needy kids across the U.S.

For kids, a decent pair of shoes is much more important than you might think, says Roni.

“A not-so-funny thing happens at school when your shoes don't fit or they are falling apart,” says Roni. “Suddenly, all you can think of are your feet. Who's staring at my shoes? They're so tight, I'll



A grateful young man with a pair of sneakers provided by the charity

have to take them off to walk home. What if my shoe falls apart playing at recess?

“Some kids don't have any shoes to wear at all. Which means they can't go to school and learn. Which means they don't have much hope for a future.”

Shoes That Fit provides that hope, helping more

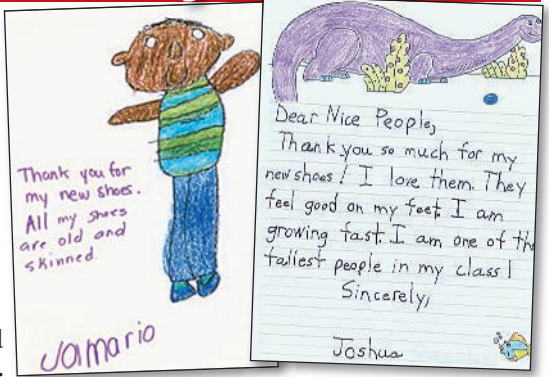
than 1,200 schools across America. School staffs identify kids who need shoes, measure their feet, then give the shopping list to volunteers who go out and buy exactly what the kids want. They also sometimes buy clothes for the children.

“New shoes provide dignity, hope, pride and self-esteem,” said Roni. “That's an awful lot of good things in a small box.”

ONE 12-YEAR-OLD GIRL from California wrote to Roni, telling her that she was often self-conscious in school because she wore old clothes and shoes.

“Because my dad has to go where he can find work, my family moves a lot. It's very hard going to a new school so often, and even harder making new friends.

“When I arrived at my new school,



“Thank You” notes from appreciative kids

my mom learned about the Shoes That Fit program, and I was given a whole set of new clothes and new shoes.

“I can't tell you how this has changed my life.

“I feel so proud and so pretty. I had kids talking to me, and I feel really good about myself.”

To learn more about Shoes That Fit and how you can help, visit www.shoesthatfit.org.

TELL US ABOUT A KIND PERSON

If you know of someone who deserves to be honored for acts of kindness, please let us know by e-mailing us at: letters@nationalenquirer.com. Or write to us at: Acts of Kindness, National Enquirer, 1000 American Media Way, Boca Raton, FL 33464-1000. We'll pay you \$250 if we use your submission.