

SPRING 2022

SHOES NEWS

News and Information for Friends of Shoes That Fit

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Smiles in michigan

Thanks to your generosity, approximately 3,000 kids in the Detroit area got new shoes for school!

When The Good Life Agency reached out to us on behalf of the River Rouge School District, we knew we needed to help.

42.2% of River Rouge residents live in poverty, according to the US Census. **90%** of the students receive free or reduced-price lunch. But also:

"These schools and students have been deeply impacted by the pandemic, the school has lost staff, and many students have lost parents to COVID-19. We are extremely grateful to Shoes That Fit for recognizing the immediate need to help. Our goal is to raise awareness and be able to help even more schools."

— Vivian Palmer, CEO, *The Good Life Agency*

158 young future leaders from Eagle's Nest Academy in Flint, Michigan

319 budding little scientists, mathematicians, and engineers at River Rouge STEM Academy

347 future athletes, coaches, and teachers at Clarence E. Sabbath Middle School

425 young future innovators and inventors from George Washington Carver Academy

650 creative young artists from Kindergarten to 5th grade at Ann Visger Preparatory Academy

1,084 teens ready to take on the world at River Rouge High School

TOTAL: 2,983 kids!

Your generosity provided shoes for:

A young girl with dark skin, glasses, and braids is smiling broadly while holding a large cardboard box. She is wearing a pink face mask pulled down under her chin. In the background, another child is visible, also wearing a pink face mask and a red jacket. The scene appears to be indoors, possibly in a school hallway or classroom.

**Watch a
video of the
kids getting their
shoes! Just click
on the picture!**



DeAndre' Delivers in Cleveland!



THANK YOU to DeAndre' and to the Steve and Marjorie Harvey Foundation for investing in these children!

For the past two years, DeAndre' Bembry and Steve Harvey have joined forces to help children in our most vulnerable communities! DeAndre' (of the Milwaukee Bucks) and Steve (of Family Feud fame) collaborated to give shoes to over 600 children over the NBA All-Star Weekend – first in Indianapolis last year, and then in Cleveland this year.

DeAndre' started a nonprofit, AP World, after losing his brother Adrian to violence just weeks prior to DeAndre' being drafted into the NBA. The mission of AP World is to promote a culture of peace and embolden families who are grieving due to violence.

The CEO of Boys and Girls Club of Northeast Ohio, Jeff Scott, shared how much new shoes mean to the kids: "We are so grateful to DeAndre' Bembry and Shoes That Fit for thinking of our kids, **who do not always have the ability to buy new shoes whenever they need them.** Our kids will be excited to showcase their new shoes. Shoes That Fit helps kids improve self-esteem and participation at school by **eliminating one of poverty's most visible and debilitating marks.** Cleveland has the highest child-poverty rate in the nation, with 51% of the children in the city living below the poverty line." 

A Few Quick Highlights



Sam Bregman, a high school student in the Phoenix area, delivered shoes and smiles to 405 kids in his hometown of Chandler.

Listerhill Credit Union gave shoes to over 1,100 kids in Alabama! They gave shoes in September, October, and February... and they have plans to keep going!



Sandy Jenkins, a volunteer in Bridgeport, Connecticut, was featured on News 12 Long Island! Click on the picture to see Sandy's interview where she remembers how much new shoes meant to her as a child, and how that inspired her to take action.



In December, the Los Angeles Dodgers partnered with Shoes That Fit to give shoes and toys! Naomi Rodriguez, Dodger VP of External Affairs & Community Relations, shared: "This year we brought the Dodgers Holiday Express to schools surrounding Dodger Stadium and were able to surprise 400 children with much-needed gifts and a special visit from Santa Claus!"



Prison Fellowship

Shaun Alexander, former NFL MVP and Alabama Crimson Tide All-American, took the stage to talk to 100 kids he had something in common with. All 100 kids and Shaun grew up in single-parent homes.

Shaun's father was absent, and his mother raised him alone. Despite the challenges, Shaun said, "I wasn't going to let that stop me from being who God wanted me to become." He's gone on to succeed in life. And he was there to share a message of hope with the kids.

Every kid present is being raised in a single-parent home because their other parent is incarcerated. The football camp was hosted by Prison Fellowship, a Christian non-profit serving former prisoners and their families through the difficulties of incarceration.

The Police Athletic League (PAL) and the Walmart Center for Racial Equity joined as co-hosts.

Prison Fellowship president and CEO James Ackerman shared the mission of the camp:

It's all about
providing
HOPE



"It's all about providing hope."

Along with a fun football training, every camper was given lunch and a new pair of sneakers. Volunteers from PAL encouraged and taught the kids. "This is my first time volunteering," said Amos Brown, a retired train engineer. Brown enjoys being a grandpa to his four grandkids and spending time with them. He was moved at seeing the difference it makes to the kids to get undistracted, one-on-one attention from an adult who cares. "This has been a wake-up call for me, just seeing this almost brought tears to my eyes."

Thank you, Prison Fellowship, PAL, and Walmart for providing an afternoon of play for these children facing such tough circumstances.

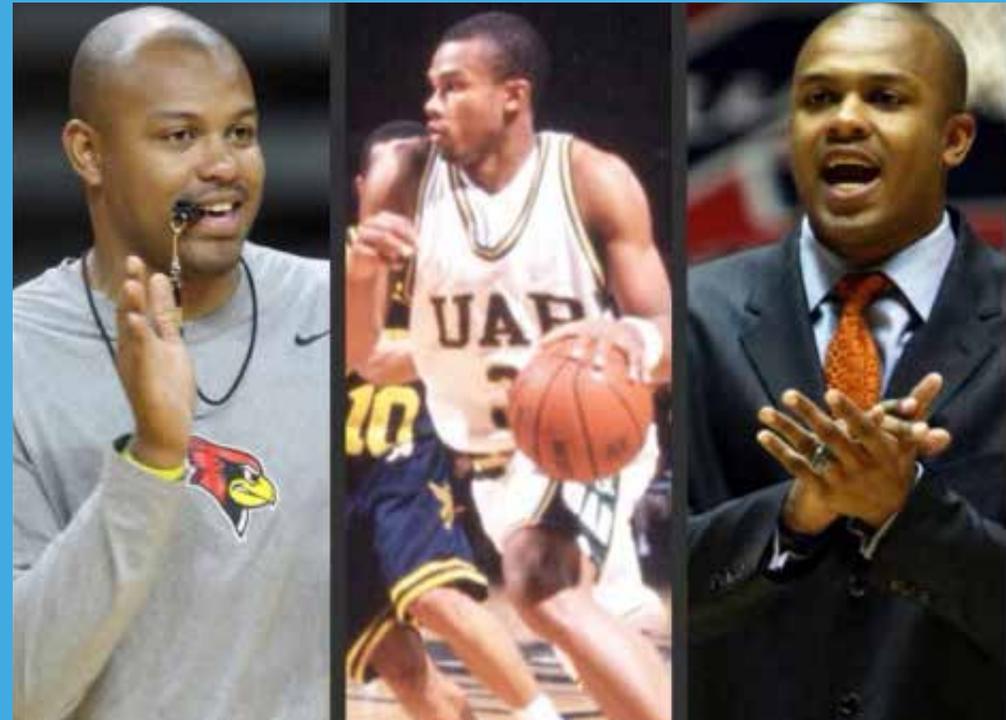
TeamTWARD3

Family and friends honor the legacy of coach Torrey Ward, a charismatic coach and mentor to student-athletes who tragically died in April 2015. Torrey served as assistant basketball coach at Ole Miss and Jacksonville State University before leaving for Illinois State to join Dan Mueller's staff as assistant coach. Torrey's mother, Janice Ward, founded the "TWard3 team" in memory of her son.

Janice began partnering with Shoes That Fit in 2018 to support communities where Torrey had been a coach and mentor. "After losing my son Torrey in 2015, our family wanted to find a way to help others and continue his legacy. We knew we wanted the shoes to be part of every project we did because my son really liked shoes – especially sneakers," says Ward. "

"Kids can feel shame from not having nice clothes and shoes. We hope that the shoes and socks that our project provides will help kids feel more confident and have higher self-esteem!"

— JANICE WARD



The **SOLE** Purpose: Honoring Helpers



Sophia's Story

Sophia grew up in Alabama, and as the third of four sisters, she got hand-me-down shoes and clothes.

Sometimes the hand-me-downs fit, and sometimes they didn't. Sophia remembers wearing an awesome pair of Asics to P.E., but they were a half-size too small, so she'd spend the rest of the day hobbling with hurt feet.

When Sophia went to the nurses' office for her vision and hearing test, the school nurse noticed that she had holes in her shoes. The next day, the nurse quietly called Sophia out of class and took her shopping for new shoes. "That day changed my life!"

Fast forward 20+ years... Sophia was living and working in NYC and looking for somewhere to volunteer. When she heard about Shoes That Fit, she knew she'd found the right place to pay it forward.

Sophia shared: "My husband Tim is awesome, and he

jumped in with me to help kids in our neighborhood of Long Island City. The principal at the local school told us that the school has help for students in many other areas, **but that they had no resources for providing new shoes."**

Sophia and Tim have run two shoe drives now! Though they are soon moving up to Boston, they are eager to find another school to help.

"I hope the kids know that they deserve new and awesome shoes and clothes. And just because they don't have them, doesn't mean they don't deserve them. It just means the world is a little too cruel. I hope the kids know how worthy they are. **And I hope they feel more confident and comfortable to go play or to run for Class President in their new shoes!"** 📌