

# Suitcase donations help needs of foster children

By Terri Schwartz | June 11, 2009

One foster father has seen displaced children come and go, carrying their belongings in a sad black trash bag. Ron Nickerson created the Suitcases4Kids initiative with the goal of giving all the foster children in New England a suitcase to carry their belongings between foster homes.

"Each suitcase represents one kid in care," said Nickerson. "Every kid deserves a home and every kid deserves permanency."

With three drop-off points coordinated at Triton Regional High School, Pentucket Regional High School, and Masconomet Regional High School, the first suitcase collection day will be held Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Nickerson and cochair Donna White started the initiative two months ago with a goal of collecting 1,000 suitcases for the foster children at the Haverhill Department of Children and Families, which is cosponsoring the Saturday event.

From there, they intend to spread the initiative throughout Massachusetts and eventually across New England, with a goal of collecting 14,000 suitcases, Nickerson said.

"The messages the trash bags are sending [are] you're not important, you're not valuable," said White. "Ron said to me the message the trash bags might be sending is that [the foster children] are trash, too. How sad. How truly sad." ■

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