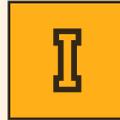


TIGER PRIDE



T is for the **TEACHERS** at Kirksville R-III. We rely on their expertise to choose the children who need our help. Administrators, nurses, counselors, and other school personnel have recognized needs as well. Educating these students is too often jeopardized when the child is expressing hunger, experiencing ridicule from their peers, or demonstrating poor behavior. The schools identify with these children and their families--they know the circumstances behind the need--and we don't question their decision. We try to comply or find someone who can. We are often told that the help these children receive has resulted in nothing but positive reactions--attendance has improved, disciplinary problems are fewer, and academic improvement is noticeable. Most importantly, children of all socio-economic levels are getting involved and helping when they can. "Leveling the playing field" has become an obvious objective.



I is for **INDIVIDUAL**. Each child is treated individually and based strictly on his or her need. Requests over the years have been varied and in some cases, quite a challenge. We've gone from flip-flops to a mattress. We've provided everything from diapers to adult cover-alls. We've asked professionals for eye and dental care, and paid for immunizations that a foreign student needed to enter school. We've provided art classes, cheerleading camp, little league entry fees, and dance classes for exceptional children who were individually identified for their talent but lacked the resources to attend. We've helped with book fairs and after school parties. Mainly and foremost in our goals, is we've seen to it that no child goes home at the end of the weekday without something in his or her backpack that will fill the hunger gap each night. We've provided food for families at each and every holiday and school break--families that are chosen by the teachers and administrators--this remains our TOP priority.



G is for **GRATITUDE**. We wish that everyone who has helped us in the past could see the gratitude these children express. It may be a crayon scribbled "thank you," a thumbs up in the hallway, or even a simple smile. When a young girl receives her first book, one she has picked out herself, she can't help but question that she is actually allowed to take it home to keep forever. When she is finally convinced, her smile is contagious. A bright young boy was struggling terribly in class. He had recently been abandoned and left with his grandfather. When the teacher realized that he was having difficulty reading, she asked if we could help--the grandfather had no financial means to provide the child with eye care. Glasses were provided and the boy excelled and shared with all the wonders that he saw--the trees, the airplane, the colors. **GRATITUDE???** From the teachers, we continue to be told that many of the disciplinary problems these children have had in the past are now diminished--mainly because the children look forward to coming to a safe place and a place where someone cares.



E

E is for **EXPENSES**. When we started the Foundation, we focused primarily on the hunger side of the need. And, we can honestly say we had no idea what we were doing. When we bothered to dig into the whole picture, we realized that 53 to 59 percent of these children were on the Free or Assisted Lunch Program. This alone set the stage for what became a need beyond hunger. This provided us with a realization that these children were from homes in need--not just because it was convenient for the children to eat at school.

When we spent time at the schools, we were told children were coming to school without underwear, winter coats or boots. Girls were staying home from school because families could not afford the feminine hygiene items they needed. Children were not participating in gym classes because they didn't have tennis shoes. We decided to expand our efforts and with the expansion, came more expenses. But the community has supported us and we feel it is fair to you that you know we are helping in many areas of these children's education. Unfortunately, it now takes a budget of around \$38,000 a year--obviously, we need your help. Please be assured that most all income goes directly to the Kirksville schools--to the schools right here in our own home town--and the schools are proud of your support.

R

R is for the **REASON** we do this. We are now into our 7th year. Our volunteer board of five community members still does not take a salary--we still have no office--and our very limited overhead consists mainly of mailing costs and liability insurance. So why??

Because there was a young girl who was eating crayons at her desk because she was hungry.

Because a teacher asked a student why he kept wearing the same dirty t-shirt to school every day and he said it was the only one he had that fit. We bought him a few appropriate shirts and he wrote us a thank you expressing he especially liked the Cardinal's shirt--we knew the crayon note must have been written by him when the "r" was left out of shirt.

Because a young boy who received a free book at a book fair wrote a nice, long thank you note which included the sentence; "I don't mean this in a bad way, but why did you do this??"

There is no **ONE** good reason why we shouldn't help out if we can and there are hundreds of reasons why we should--and every one of those hundreds has a face and a smile just waiting to be shown.

This community has **TIGER PRIDE** in our schools and it shows in your support!



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