

Catoosa County Children's Fund

In the late 1980's David Vanderslice, former manager of Ingles, watched a documentary on the impact of poverty on children's education. The documentary was made in another state and David was certain children in Catoosa County were not facing the same struggles. That is, until he talked with some local educators and learned that there were many families in the community who were in need. David vowed to help these children.

In July 1988, the Catoosa County Children's Fund was formed. David approached the school system, businesses and civic groups about supporting the Fund. School system employees, groups and individuals would donate money. The school system would administer the funds with the Children's Fund Board setting policy for how the money would be used.

To be eligible for assistance the family must have a child enrolled in a Catoosa County Public School. Each school accepts applications from parents for help with utilities, clothing, food, rent, and medical assistance. The Children's Fund also purchases eyeglasses. In time, a scholarship program was added providing scholarships to students from each high school. There is a limit on the amount of assistance to each family per school year. If the family needs more assistance the school system's social workers coordinate with other agencies on the family's behalf.

Children need to arrive at school each day ready to learn. If the family lacks electricity, water or food the child's education will suffer. Having the Children's Fund as a resource allows school personnel to ensure no child has to go without basic needs. Each school year the Fund provides over \$30,000 in assistance to our families. All of the money comes from donations.

100 percent of the money stays in Catoosa County and helps Catoosa County students. 100 percent of the money is tax deductible. 100 percent of the money goes to charity. There are no administrative costs and no money used to pay salaries of the fund raisers.

A new fundraiser that has been approved by the Children's Fund Board is "Mason Jars for Kids". A local hair stylist, Jackie Weekley, approached the Board with her idea and it was unanimously approved. Jackie places a mason jar at the station of a local hair stylist. The customer is asked to donate one dollar per visit. All of the money placed in the "Mason Jars for Kids" goes directly to the Children's Fund in Catoosa County. Please contact, Jackie Weekley, at 423-779-7520 if you would like a "Mason Jars for Kids" placed with your hair stylist.

The Catoosa County Children's Fund has been helping children in Catoosa County for over 25 years. With your help we can continue to ensure our students have no barriers to education.