



## SAMPLE PROJECT IDEA SHEET:

### COLLECT SUITCASES FOR FOSTER CARE CHILDREN

Throughout their young lives, many foster care children will move several times from family to family. Most have few personal possessions, toys and clothing and are forced to carry their belongings in paper or plastic trash bags. Your club can contribute to the dignity of a foster child by providing him with a safe place in which to store his special treasures.

#### How Lions Clubs Can Help

**Step 1:** Identify local and state organizations who are involved with the care of foster children to determine if they are seeking suitcase donations. These can include:

- Foster Care Agencies
- Department of Social Services
- Children's Protective Services
- Department of Family/Youth Services
- Health and Human Services Department

**Step 2:** Verify quantities of suitcases needed and storage plans, such as 1) can the suitcases be stored at the foster care agency/organization, or 2) will your club need to find a place where surplus donations can be kept. Also, does the organization prefer gently used and/or new suitcases?

**Step 3:** Select a location for your suitcase collection. Successful places to conduct a collection include schools, office buildings, places of worship, libraries or community centers. Secure permission to hold your suitcase collection in these locations.

**Step 4:** Begin planning your collection. You may wish to extend your collection for 2-3 weeks. Enlist the aid of your nearby Leo club or other youth clubs, like Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Contact friends, co-workers and neighbors to help. Set a goal for how many suitcases you want to collect.

**Step 5:** Promote your suitcase collection. You may also wish to accept large backpacks and duffel bags, which can be used to carry a child's belongings. Let the community know which organization(s) will be receiving your collections. Enlist the help of your Club Public Relations Chair to promote your collection.

- Place flyers or posters in highly visible places. Let the community know the dates and times of your collection, the exact location and the organization that will benefit from these donations.
- Use newspaper ads, phone calls and e-mails to promote your suitcase collection.
- Announce your collection on your club's Web site.
- Remember to send follow up reminders.

- Step 6:** Collect the suitcases for the foster care children and youth. You may consider collecting for consecutive days, preferably for a duration of 2-3 weeks. Spread the word! Make sure to clearly mark your designated donation area and choose a safe location to avoid accident/injury. Be sure to pick up the donated cases on a daily basis as a courtesy to the host of the collection site.
- Step 7:** After your collection ends, sort through the donations to remove suitcases that are broken or can no longer be used. Make a note of the number of cases, backpacks and/or duffel bags collected.
- Step 8:** Drop off your suitcases to the designated foster care agency/organization or make arrangements to have them delivered to the organization you selected. Your cases can then be distributed to the foster children.
- Step 9:** Send “thank you” letters to individuals or organizations who participated and publicize your successful project in the community newspapers. You may want to recap the types of items that were collected and donated.
- Step 10:** Celebrate your club’s accomplishments. Issue certificates of appreciation to members and volunteers. You may want to present a Lions Children First Certificate of Appreciation to those who provided the collection sites.

## What to Donate

Clean, empty, usable suitcases, or large backpacks and duffel bags, free from stains and tears.

## Share your success!

Please tell us about your project by visiting the Association’s Web site at [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org). Just type “Lions Children First” in the search box to find an easy, on-line survey for your convenience.



## Lions Clubs International

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