

# Mission: Support Kids

Helping to provide dignity and comfort to children in foster care

## My Story

by Alex Todak-Schwartz

I remember entering my first foster home and feeling out of place. I was scared. I didn't know what was going to happen, or what the future held. As soon as I would get familiar with a place, I would be moved somewhere else. What I remember the most from those first few homes were the many nights I spent feeling alone and afraid, crying myself to sleep. I had nothing of my own to anchor myself and feel safe, or loved.

I remember receiving a blanket. An organization had made and donated them, it gave me a feeling of comfort, knowing that someone cared enough to provide these blankets made me feel just a little bit more seen and valued.

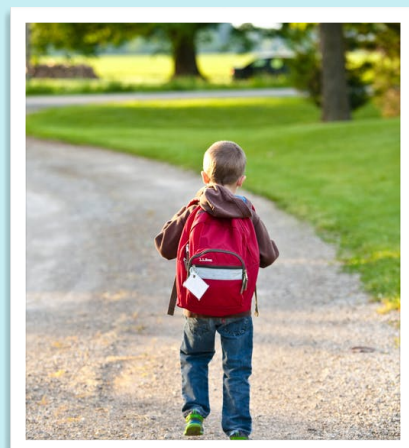
I know how important those acts of love and kindness are to children in the foster care system. I want to provide something that helps them to feel like they have that anchor, something that they can feel safe in knowing belongs to them. I want to provide items of comfort for those times when they feel alone. I want to provide things that will help calm their worried and anxious minds. I want to show them that they are worthy, valued, important.

This is why I have created this group, Mission: Support Kids. We provide backpacks with care items to help kids have a sense of belonging, a sense of dignity, and a sense of worth.



## HOW CAN WE HELP?

We can create a pack that provides a feeling of containment, a safe space that is theirs to keep their important and meaningful items. We can provide personal products that encourage self care and positive self esteem. We can provide a fidget toy and materials to help instill healthy coping skills during this time of stress and uncertainty. We can provide items of comfort that they can snuggle with. We can put our love and energy into creating this package that shows them that they are worth the effort, that there are people in the world that care about them.



## Where We Are Now

We currently have packs designed for younger kids (6-11) and older kids (12+). We are working on developing packs for infants and toddlers. Our current packs contain:

- Backpack- To ease the feelings of shame and embarrassment that can come with having to carry their belongings in a trash bag. It also provides a sense of containment, a safe place that they know they can keep their things and take from place to place. It is a small piece of consistency.
- Hygiene items- To show them the importance of self care and to encourage positive self esteem. Self image is important and some kids may have come from homes where they were never taught that they deserved to look and feel their best.
- Fidget toy- These have been shown in some cases to help kids calm down when experiencing anxiety, nervousness, and stress.
- Coloring book/Journal- The younger kids get a coloring book and crayons, while the older kids get a journal. This gives them a creative outlet to express their feelings.
- Stuffed animal- These are included to help provide a feeling of warmth and comfort.
- Book- This gives them a place where they can go and take a break and read about something they enjoy. (The goal here is to have an account at a local book store so they can pick their own book.)

### Are you interested in helping?

We are currently working on making Mission: Support Kids a part of the Social Justice Team. We need members who believe in this cause to join our team. We will work to find support among the local businesses and community. We will assemble the care packs and deliver the bags to the local foster care agencies. Some of the ongoing tasks will include shopping for supplies, maintaining the website, talking to local businesses, delivering the back packs, answering questions of interested persons. You can join our private Facebook group if you would like to see more of what we've done so far, it is called Mission: Support Kids

