

Council in helping mode throughout the year

COMMUNITY NEWS

Since 2000, the more than 30,000 employee volunteers of the 30 companies that are members of the Northern New Jersey Business Volunteer Council (BVC) have been working year-round to help children and families with some very big issues like hunger, literacy, education and well-being.

In the past eight years, the BVC members have generated and distributed almost a million dollars in resources through several initiatives focusing on impacting the lives of low-income children and families.

Through the Books in a Bag program, more than 3,330 new books were distributed this year to 670 children to encourage a love of reading. Employee volunteers collect, sort, bag and deliver the books to children in Head Start programs and other childcare centers. Many employees also volunteer to spend time reading to the children. Over the past eight years, volunteers have collected and distributed more than \$214,000 in books for children.

Children who are removed from their homes and placed in foster care often must leave all their own

“stuff” behind. Through BVC’s Just My Bag initiative, employee volunteers collect personal care items, socks, underwear and gifts, and put them in backpacks. More than 3,000 bags have been distributed to foster children through Youth Consultation Services, which contracts with the state to provide foster care services.

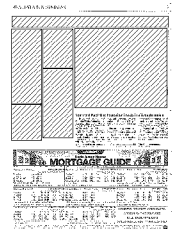
Every August the BVC coordinates Tools for School, a back to school supply drive, benefiting children whose families’ resources don’t stretch far enough to provide basic school supplies. To date, more than \$285,000 worth of school gear has been distributed, from backpacks to binders, composition books to calculators. The year 2008 has proven to be another successful year for this initiative – 13 participating companies collected almost \$40,000 worth of school supplies which were distributed to children across New Jersey.

To combat summer shortages at area food pantries, employee volunteers organize Brown Bag Buddies, a collection of cash and nutritious, kid-friendly foods distributed through Center for Food Action

and other organizations serving low-income families that rely on school meal programs. More than \$200,000 worth of food and grocery store gift certificates have been distributed to date.

This past October, 64 volunteers from eight companies participated in the Fairmount Playground Project, and helped build a playground from the ground up for children in Hackensack. BVC members were represented by Becton Dickinson in Franklin Lakes, Spectra Labs in Rockleigh, Amper Cares and Cole, Schotz, Meisel, Forman and Leonard in Hackensack, HudsonCity Savings Bank in Emerson, Hackensack Water in Harrington Park and PSE&G headquartered in Newark.

The BVC is co-sponsored by the Volunteer Center of Bergen County and Bergen County’s United Way. New members are currently being accepted. For more information, contact Tess Tomasi at ttomasi@bergenvolunteers.org or call 201-489-9454 x114.



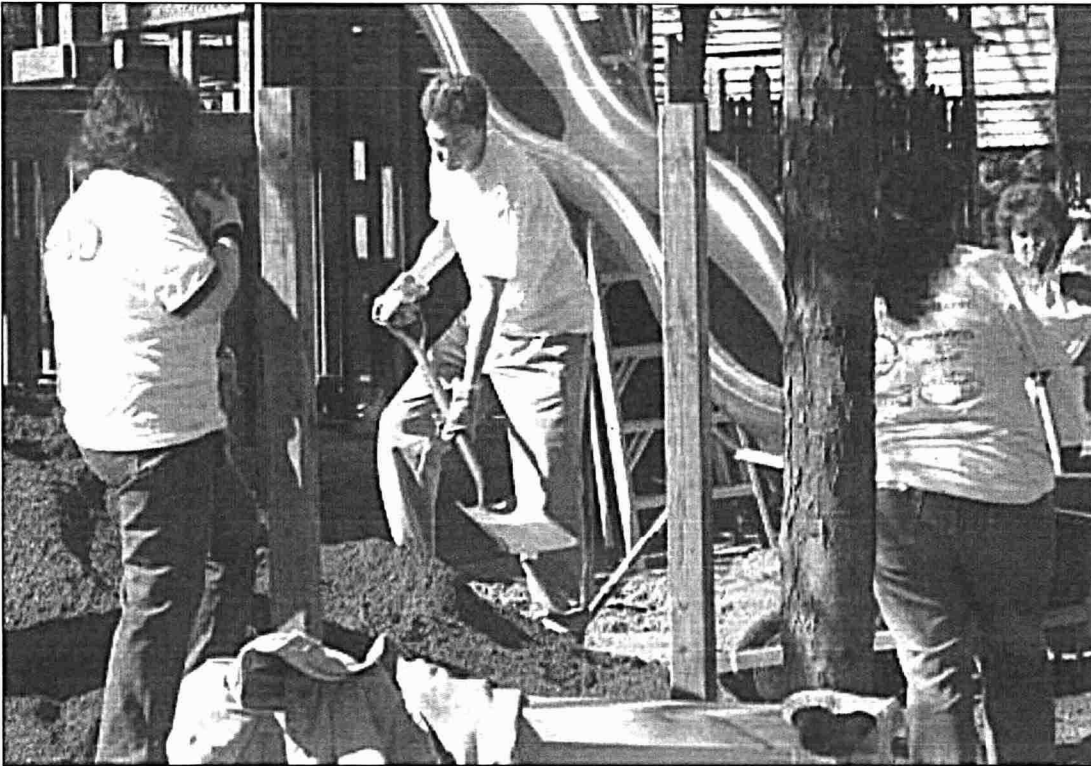


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The Northern New Jersey Business Volunteer Council mobilizes employee volunteers in helping to meet community needs, especially those of children and families. Shown are members participating in a playground building project, one of several initiatives undertaken over the course of a year.