



Spring Arrives for Children in Montgomery County's Foster Care System



What if a baseball bat wasn't just a baseball bat? What if it was a chance to get involved in a new community and new school after your father passed away and you recently moved? What if it was an opportunity to be part of a healthy, fun sport where you could learn valuable life skills and make new friends? And what if you were too tall to use your teammates' bats? That's when a bat is more than a bat and what a new baseball bat meant to JR, one of our children in foster care who went through a terrible winter.

But baseball also means that spring is finally here after this long hard year. For the children, teenagers, and young adults that 4Montgomery's Kids serves, it means a return to school, sports, summer camp, and employment. As for JR, it may mean new beginnings and a return to a more normal way of life.

Things have been exceptionally tough for children in the foster care system. Between July 2020 and March 2021, there were almost 7,000 calls to Montgomery County's Child Welfare to report child abuse and neglect. The average number of children and youth in foster care is 435 each month. In addition, 110 children remain with their biological families but are being monitored by social workers. There is also concern that because most children have not been in school an important source of identifying children being mistreated has been missing. At the same time, young adults who are aging out of Child Welfare are unable to find jobs to cover housing and other expenses.

Thanks to our generous donors, 4MK has been able to quickly and fully respond to every request we have received this past year! From families experiencing food insecurity to students needing laptops, to young adults unable to pay rent, and, yes, to a baseball bat for JR. In the words of one of our donors, 4MK has kept "these kids in the forefront during this tragic time for our country" and it's only through your help we have been able to do it.

Spotlight on a Donor: Janet Thomas



Janet Thomas is a retired teacher from Prince George's County Public Schools where she taught for 33 years. Throughout her career she helped hundreds of students to find part-time government jobs which in many cases turned into full time employment upon graduation or allowed them to save money for college tuition. Along the way she found time to mentor young adults through the Bernie Scholarship program and 4Montgomerys Kids.

Janet has lived in Montgomery County for more than 30 years and raised two now adult children here. 4Montgomery's Kids is particularly grateful for many donations and for hosting a house party so that her friends could learn about our work. Janet recently made a donation in honor of a friend's birthday and said: "I can't think of a better way to honor a loved one or celebrate a special occasion than to make a donation to 4MK's. You are not only remembering someone special, but you are also helping improve the lives of young people in our community."

[Stand with Janet: Support 4MK](#)

Spotlight on a Social Worker: Nicholas Burnett



Nicolas Weiner is a social worker in the adoptions unit of Montgomery County Child Welfare Services. He started as a social work intern and became full-time in August 2017 after getting his Licensed Master of Social Work from the University of Maryland.

Nicolas told us that public service is an honor and that working to strengthen the community of Montgomery County has brought many joys but also many challenges. He loves 4Montgomery's Kids and uses us often to bring smiles and joy to the children in foster care on his case load, whether for summer camps, new basketball sneakers or electronics. Recently, 4Montgomery Kids purchased a laptop for one of his teens in a group home to use for school, fun, and computer programming, his favorite hobby.

Nicolas, you are one of the unsung heroes of the foster care system and we salute you.

Summer Camp

After this long hard winter, Montgomery County is opening up summer camps. What a difference this will make for children in foster care. We are so optimistic that at last “kids” will be able to enjoy summer activities in the great outdoors.

But, summer camp is not cheap. Two years ago, before covid hit, we sent 33 children to various camps, day camp, sleep away camp and specialty camps as well as to summer school programs. Montgomery County social workers are already contacting 4MK to see if we will once again be paying for camps. We are so happy that we can tell them that with your help, our generous donors, we will.

Top Requests for 2021



Through early May, 4MK has filled nearly 90 requests from social workers to support children in foster care. That puts us on track for our the highest number of requests in one year. The top three categories that have received the most requests are:

- Education: including computers, books, and tutoring. Most of these requests were related to online schooling.
- Housing: including rent, security deposits, household goods, and food cards. The majority of these requests focused on teens and young adults aging out of the foster care system.
- Transportation: including car insurance, repairs, Uber and Metro. Almost all of these requests were for getting to work and back, medical appointments, and visits between parents and children.

But beyond these, we have filled many requests for items as varied as a prom dress, graduation caps and gowns, birthday presents and so many others related to helping families stay together.

You our donors, are the heroes in the lives of these children. None of this would be possible without you. As always, on behalf of our children, teens and young adults, we thank you!!

www.4Montgomeryskids.org

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