

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

SMALL PROJECTS
WITH

Big Results

DOING GOOD

Goods for Good, The Little
Nonprofit That Could

BY MARGARET CRANDALL



Elizabeth Workman,
founder, Goods for Good

From the outside, Goods For Good looks like a quiet, empty school building that could use some TLC. But inside, it's neither quiet nor empty. In the front room, Executive Director Elizabeth Workman is playing a version of nonprofit Whac-A-Mole: Making space on long tables for a children's book drive project, answering volunteers' questions, laughing as one of them parades around in a donated evening gown, taking photos for social media and future newsletters – all while simultaneously working on the projects she's planned for the next few months.

In the back rooms, volunteers are sorting through hundreds of bags and boxes of donated clothing, tossing unusable stuff into "re-donate" and "yuck" piles, while folding and storing the usable items that will go to shelters for migrants, pop-up events for resettled refugees, and into orders that come in from nonprofit partner groups. "Who was looking for women's shorts in size small?" someone calls out. "I'll take those!" another responds. "Have more men's shoes come in yet? We're getting low on size 9."

Goods For Good projects range from coordinating meal preparation for local shelters, creating "We Care" gift bags for isolated seniors, collecting fans for local low-income residents without air conditioning, and much more. Since 2020, Goods For Good has worked with more than 37 nonprofit partners, provided more than \$270,000 in donated goods, and helped serve more than 49,000 people.



None of this could have happened without the 1,300 volunteers who have pitched in to help. "This all happened organically," says Workman. "When the pandemic hit, I started cooking food for a shelter, then a couple of friends helped me the next time, and after a few months, we had 40 people cooking on a regular basis. It grew so fast that pretty soon I was fielding calls from local nonprofits needing support in various ways. That first year, we had something like 600 people cooking for four shelters, collecting toys and games for quarantined low-income kids, assembling Covid health kits for families and seniors, and making Birthday-in-a-Box gifts for kids in area shelters."



"Goods For Good is a fantastic local organization, and we are so lucky they are here in our neighborhood," says Chevy Chase Village resident Alicia Fishbein. "I try whenever possible to choose activities that my two school-aged children can participate in. They've enjoyed putting together care packages for newly

arrived immigrant children and making Halloween boxes for children experiencing homelessness." She also appreciates the flexibility of the volunteer opportunities. "Thanks to them, my family is able to do what we can to help, fitting small commitments into a busy work and family schedule."

Village resident Sara Dickson learned about Goods For Good from the neighborhood listserv and signed up for a project creating bags of baby supplies for new mothers. She brought her family with her to the event. "It was a really nice way to do something good and service-oriented with our whole family, and our 9-year-old and 11-year-old enjoyed it." Since then she's enlisted her kids' help with other projects, including preparing lunches for shelters. "We cleared off the dining room table and spent a few hours putting sandwiches together."

For Dickson, being able to involve her children is important. "I was looking for service opportunities that I could involve my kids in, and discovered that places like food banks and shelters often have age minimums, so I was glad to find Goods For Good. We live in a very privileged part of the DC area, so I love it when I can involve my kids, to give them some perspective and understanding that it's important to help people in need."

Want to get involved? Goods For Good can always use more individual and family volunteers, and students can help out and earn community service hours. Financial contributions are welcomed year-round, with an annual appeal in November. Through the Ally program, volunteers can serve as neighborhood points of contact, collection sites, and spokespeople for Goods For Good projects. And if you've got a car and some time, drivers are always needed to transport goods to and from partner organizations.

Learn more at goodsforgooddc.org.



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