



Nicholas Lowinger, a seventh grader at The Wheeler School in Providence, Rhode Island, founded the nonprofit organization, Gotta Have Sole Foundation, Inc. which donates new shoes, sneakers, and boots to children in Rhode Island Homeless Shelters.

Nick's family regularly makes donations to area shelters, but it was a pair of boots that truly inspired Nick's social entrepreneurship. When he found out that his donated boots were too big for the grateful young boy who received them, Nick was not satisfied. He wanted to provide youth in shelters with the opportunity to break in brand new, properly fitted footwear.

Today, Gotta Have Sole is supported by Nick's family, friends, classmates and community and has donated over 650 pairs of shoes to homeless children. The project contributes to stronger self-esteem, decreased social isolation, and improved school attendance among recipients and has renewed philanthropic efforts among community members.

GenerationOn **Make Your Mark Week** (formerly Kids Care Week) inspires and mobilizes kids to use their energy, ingenuity and compassion to "make their mark on the world" through hands-on service. It is celebrated during the third week of October (Oct. 16-22, 2011) and culminates on Make a Difference Day, the largest national day of service. During the week, young people do small acts or service projects that together make a big impact on the issues that matter most to them. GenerationOn equips the youth with educational resources, tool kits, project ideas, incentives for small acts, and grants. The issue areas for Make Your Mark Week 2011 are Animals, the Environment, Homelessness, Hunger, and Literacy.

The Issue of Homelessness

"For kids, homelessness means sleeping in crowded shelters, on couches, in cars, or sometimes on the streets. It means frequent moves, being separated from family and exposure to "adult" issues, like alcoholism, drugs and violence. It means struggling to keep up in school, and the increased likelihood that they themselves will experience deep poverty and homelessness as an adult. Indeed, even if their homeless experience is short-lived, it is an experience they will never forget." — Shannon Moriarty, Change.org

Make Your Mark on Homelessness is an opportunity for youth to learn why families are homeless and how to help them. The goals for Make Your Mark on Homelessness are:

- To educate youth about why families are homeless.
- To educate youth about what it is like to experience homelessness.
- To enable youth to reach out to homeless children and families in their communities.

To make a difference for the homeless, young people can implement one of the **Make Your Mark on Homelessness projects**: Snack Attack Sacks, Shelter Collections, Birthday Party Pal Packages, Helping at Shelters, and School Supply Boxes.



The **Kids Care Club of Kimberly Park Elementary School** in **Winston-Salem, North Carolina** prepared a delicious spaghetti meal with fruit and bottled water for 100 homeless people at the local Good Samaritan Shelter. With help from faculty members and community businesses and organizations, the kids helped prepare and hand out the food packages at the shelter.



The **Morningside Kids Care Club** in **Salt Lake City, UT** made 60 Party Pal Birthday Packages for a homeless shelter. Club members decorated bags and filled them with everything one needs to have a birthday party, including a homemade card.

GenerationOn will equip the youth with these tools and resources:

- **Issues Education** through easy-to-understand fact sheets about why people are homeless: *Homelessness – Facts for Kids*.
- **Compassion Education Stories** to help young people understand what it is like to be homeless.
- **Activities** to kick off the project and educate the kids on the issue of homelessness.
- **Service Projects** including creating and distributing Snack Attack Sacks, Shelter Collections, Birthday Party Pal Packages, Helping at Shelters and School Supply Boxes.
- **Author Interviews** on books related to homelessness such as *A Shelter in Our Car* by Monica Gunning, *Someplace to Go* by Maria Testa and *The Lady in the Box* by Ann McGovern.
- **Project Tool Kit** that includes resources such as logos, letters, forms and media tools including sample press releases and public service announcements.

Thanks to our founding partner, Hasbro, generationOn will award 200 mini-grants in the amount of \$250 each to support service projects that enable youth to “make their mark” on one of the following Make Your Mark Week issue areas: Animals, the Environment, Homelessness, Hunger and Literacy.