

Carry-On The Suitcase



Project Manual

Project originated in
Harrisonville, Missouri
(Cass County Wal-Center 4-H Club)



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Acknowledgements

The Care On Suitcase Project benefits women and children as they leave abuse shelters by providing them with basic necessities as well as a sense of dignity. The Carry On Suitcase project was originally funded by a community service grant from the Missouri 4-H Foundation and W.T. Kemper Foundation of Kansas City. The next year, the Wal-Center youth and leaders applied for another community service grant with the goal of expanding the Carry-On Suitcase Project to a county-effort. Thanks to the Missouri 4-H Foundation staff and board members for believing in the Power of Youth.

I had the pleasure of meeting and working with members and leaders of the Cass County Wal-Center 4-H Club. These young people had the compassion, organization and fortitude to create a project called the "Carry-On Suitcase Project." These outstanding Wal-Center 4-H club members included Kelli Barnard, Jayme Moreland, Marcy Myler, Craig Nelson, Leiann Nelson (adult leader) Alice Roach, Danielle Roach.

Ron Turner, the Director of University of Missouri Extension became aware of the Carry-On Suitcase Project and consequently provided funds to facilitate statewide replication of the project called the Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Mini-grant project. An advisory group, including Extension staff and four members of the Wal-Center 4-H club and their adult project leader, helped guide the expansion project. The original MLK Advisory Group included Kelli Barnard, Barb Casady (Missouri 4-H Foundation), Steve Henness (MU Extension), Craig Nelson, Leiann Nelson, Alice Roach, Danielle Roach and Sarah Staude (MU Extension).

“Everybody can be great... because anybody can serve.” --Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Tammy M. Gillespie
Project Director
Martin Luther King, Jr. Mini-grant Project

The Purpose of Carry-On Suitcase Project

The Carry-On Suitcase Project assists your local battered women's shelter by providing a suitcase filled with personal care items to every woman, teen, and child who comes to the shelter.

When women and children leave their broken homes, many flee with only their life, their painful memories, and the clothes on their back. They have a difficult road in front of them when starting over.

When leaving the battered women's shelter, each woman and child is given a suitcase. This gives everyone in the family a place to keep and carry their clothes, belongings, and other personal care items, with the hope that it will help them to carry-on their lives. This project does more for these battered families than simply providing them with necessities; it shows them that someone cares and they are not alone.

History

The idea for the Carry-On Suitcase Project originated in the Wal-Center 4-H Club located in Cass County, Missouri. Utilizing a community service grant from the Missouri 4-H Foundation and the W.T. Kemper Foundation, the Wal-Center 4-H Club identified the need, designed, and implemented of the project.

Finding and Funding the Suitcases

Your club/group will be responsible for collecting suitcases or suitcase sized duffle bags. New or used suitcases can be donated or purchased. Second-hand suitcases should be in nice condition.

All suitcases should be clean and the latches/zippers should work properly. Keep in mind that these suitcases may be the only item the women and children have to carry their belongings in when they leave the shelter.

Good places to find donations are from your local churches and synagogues (a newsletter note), neighbors, youth groups (e.g., 4-H club members), relatives, thrift shops, garage sales, and auctions.

If you choose to buy suitcases, the funds available and the number of suitcases the local shelter needs will determine the amount of money you spend on each suitcase.

It is recommended your club/group spend \$3 at the most per suitcase and use the rest of the money for buying the new towel, new washcloth and other items. The total cost of each filled suitcase should not exceed eight dollars.



Suitcase Contents

The Carry-On Suitcase Project serves three different age groups: the adult/teen, the elementary child, and the baby. The size of the adult/teen suitcases should be large to medium, the elementary child suitcases should be medium to small, and the baby suitcase should be a small suitcase or carry-on size. Suitcases are then packed specifically for these groups.

All personal care items, including the towel and washcloth, must be new. The books, toys, and stuffed animals for the children and babies may be used items if they are in excellent condition. Listed below are the items that need to be included in each suitcase for the Carry-On Suitcase Project:

1. Adult/Teen

Requirements:

- Towel and washcloth
- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Toothbrush

Suggestions: toothpaste, hairbrush, disposable razor, soap, deodorant, and/or other items suited for this age group such as perfume samples, blow dryers, and curling irons.

2. Child (Elementary Age)

Requirements:

- Towel and washcloth

- ❑ Shampoo
- ❑ Conditioner
- ❑ Toothbrush

Suggestions: toothpaste, reading book, coloring book, crayons, stuffed animal, and/or other items suited for this age group.

3. Baby

Requirements:

- ❑ Towel and washcloth
- ❑ Baby bath soap
- ❑ Baby lotion
- ❑ Receiving blanket

Suggestions: Baby wipes, baby toys, stuffed animal, and/or other items suited for this age group.

Please Note:

- Shelters for battered women receive many miscellaneous items through donations. It is easier for shelters to distribute the items by having them placed in the Carry-On Suitcase Project suitcases. Please have someone from your club/group call your local shelter and arrange to pick up the items the shelter would like included in the suitcases.
- Any items that are liquid in nature must have their lids secured to avoid spilling.
- Your club/group may receive donations of sample-sized items for the Carry-On Suitcase Project. It is recommended that you put more than one into each suitcase.

Packing and Labeling the Suitcases

Before packing the suitcases with the personal care items, make sure the suitcases are clean. Use a damp rag to wipe the inside clean, doing your best to remove all stains. The suitcases don't have to be spotless, just presentable. Be sure to allow time for the suitcases to dry before packing them.

After you have cleaned the suitcases and they are dry, you should place a "Just For You" label inside each suitcase and cover it with clear packing tape. Have someone from your club/group create a label containing the information like the following example, with your club/group's name. These should be about 3"x 3" so they are visible inside the suitcase.

Carry-On

**Just for you by the _____
with help from the
University and Outreach Extension Office in
_____ County
“Improving people’s lives”**

Making a “Just For You” label shows that you and your club/group care about these women and children. It also explains the project to the recipients of the suitcase and promotes your club/group.

Packing the suitcases is a fun club/group activity. Be sure to use the lists on pages four and five in this manual to assure that each suitcase is filled appropriately. It is very important to have all of the required items in the suitcases.

The last step is to ask your shelter what would be the best identification process for suitcases. One way to do this is to mark the outsides of the suitcases with large letters approximately 1”x 1” taped on each suitcase. A label with A/T means the suitcase is for an adult or teen, a label with E means the suitcase is for an elementary age child, and a label with B means the suitcase is for a baby. This allows the shelter to easily distribute the suitcases without having to open each one of them to know what they contain.

Delivering the Suitcases

When you are ready to deliver the suitcases, please call your shelter’s administration office. If they only want 15 suitcases at a time and your club/group is planning to provide 30 suitcases, you will need to deliver them in two sets. Always contact the shelter prior to delivery.

Project Follow-Up

When the project is completed, be sure to send thank you notes to those who have contributed to your project.

Once your club/group has made the scheduled suitcase delivery(s), you will also need to send a written report back to your county extension specialist. Please include the following information in this report:

1. How many suitcases your club/group delivered for each of the following groups:
 - Adult/Teen
 - Elementary
 - Baby

2. Date(s) suitcases delivered
3. A paragraph detailing the fun experiences your club/group had doing this project, where did you get the suitcases, any donations made to the project, number of club/group members participating, and anything else you would like to share.
4. A paragraph detailing any difficulties your club/group experienced during this project.
5. Include suggestions for the future. Would your club/group be interested in doing this project again? Include changes or suggestions to procedures as well.
6. Pictures of your club/group members working on the project. **NOTE: DO NOT TAKE PICTURES OUTSIDE THE SHELTER AS THEY MUST KEEP THEIR LOCATION PRIVATE AND SECURE.**

