



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF BETHALTO

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF BETHALTO ANNOUNCES SHOE DRIVE TO BENEFIT SOLES4SOULS

BETHALTO, IL – The Boys & Girls Club of Bethalto is encouraging its members and the community to donate new or gently worn shoes for Soles4Souls, a charity which distributes footwear to people in need.

As part of its Martin Luther King Day of Service project, the Club will kick off its shoe drive on January 18 and continue collecting shoes until February 26. The MLK Day of Service, in collaboration with the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, is helping transform the holiday honoring the civil rights leader into a day of volunteering and service to the community. Keystone and Torch Clubs, the Boys & Girls Club's respective high school and middle school leadership programs, are spearheading the drive and looking for local donation sites in the community.

"Instead of being just a day off of school, we want to make Dr. King's holiday a day for our members to help and give back to others," said Tad Middleton, the Club's program director. "Our leadership groups have embraced the idea of service, and they are working hard to get others involved."

The Club and Soles4Souls are urging the community to clean out their closets of footwear. It is estimated that Americans have 1.5 billion pairs of unused shoes lying in closets. In addition, a donation of \$1 per pair of shoes is suggested to offset the shipping cost to Soles4Souls, based in Nashville, Tenn.

Every nine seconds, Soles4Souls gives away shoes to those who may be subject to extreme poverty or are victims of a natural disaster, like the recent earthquake in Haiti. Since 2005, the charity has provided over 5.5 million pairs of new or gently worn shoes in over 125 countries.

"We can use the shoes taking up space in your closet to change the world one pair at a time," said Wayne Eley, Soles4Souls' founder and chief operating officer. "We need our partners, like the Boys & Girls Club of Bethalto, to step up and get behind our call for action. It's one of the most simple yet profound gifts you can make, because it will greatly improve someone's life in the most difficult times.

For more information, visit the Club, located at 324 E. Central St. in Bethalto, or call 377-6030. The Club is open 2:15-8:30 p.m., Monday-Thursday, and 2:15-5:30 p.m. on Friday and its office hours are 9 a.m.-7 p.m., Monday-Thursday, and 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. on Friday. In existence for over 40 years, the Club provides programming to 1,500 members in Bethalto and the surrounding communities.

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