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## CASE STUDY



## Kids-Helping-Kids: Youth Philanthropy in Action

### The Challenge-How to Enable Youth Philanthropy

Youth philanthropy, or young people giving back to their communities, is incredibly powerful, both for the young leaders and their communities. Youth philanthropy can foster a cycle of giving, in which communities can receive the resources they need by tapping into the youth in those communities for ideas and leadership, while young people gain the skills that make them effective leaders. Allowing young people to organize service initiatives that they deem valuable because of their intimate knowledge of their communities' needs, ultimately fosters empathy, personal growth, and confidence for that young leader. This in turn benefits the community in having active problem solvers embedded in the community. Research indicates that participation in youth philanthropy programs is declining. In 2018, there were an estimated 513 such programs in the United States. In 2021 there were an estimated 475 programs.<sup>1</sup> These efforts will only be effective if these initiatives can successfully inspire youth to get engaged.<sup>2</sup>

The challenge is how to effectively enable youth philanthropy as nonprofits often lack the capacity to involve youth in their initiatives, especially as leaders. As a result, youth philanthropy is often seen as a “nice to have” initiative, especially for non-profits who lack the material resources and/or sufficient staff to efficiently manage young participants while assuring their creative agency.

### A Solution - “Kids-Helping-Kids”

The “Kids-Helping-Kids” philosophy stems from the concept of youth philanthropy. The term has come to encapsulate the numerous programs sponsored and supported by Someone Else’s Child Foundation that emphasizes youth leadership within their communities. Mike and Diane Christian coined the tagline “Kids-Helping-Kids” about 25 years ago when facilitating back-to-school supply drives in Marblehead, Massachusetts. Since then, the Foundation has developed a wide network of associated schools and organizations whose youth members are ready to lead. Young people have a deep knowledge of their own

<sup>1</sup> <https://heller.brandeis.edu/sillerman/pdfs/youth-philanthropy/yp-infographic-summary.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Nordstrom, O., Tulibaski, K.L.G., Peterson, T.O. (2022). Bridging the Gap: A Qualitative Analysis of What It Takes to Inspire Youth to Engage in Volunteering. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* (Vol. 51(2)), 350–368.

communities' needs and simply need the resources and support of experienced adults to balance offering guidance with providing independence. The concept of “Kids-Helping-Kids” has become a way for the Foundation to reimagine the process of giving and charity. Understanding our community members as resources rather than merely recipients has made our programs much more impactful.

The Foundation will continue to call on its partners to recruit youth representatives whose ideas for philanthropic initiatives serve their communities and generate their personal and interpersonal skills. Because the Foundation has the resources and staff capability to supply events like these, young people have the freedom to thought-lead.

“Kids-Helping-Kids” events take numerous forms, but most often, the Foundation staff have worked closely with young people, between the ages of about 14 and 18 to organize and distribute goods for members of their communities.

## Results

Since November of 2022, “Kids-Helping-Kids” events, facilitated by the Foundation, have served over 400 families in Boston and surrounding cities. Across two schools and three partner non-profits, middle schoolers and high-school students have worked closely with the Foundation staff to organize and distribute culturally relevant food products, hygiene necessities, and winter gear. Examples of the Foundation’s collaborations include:

- Partnering with the Hernandez School in Boston to conduct a food drive in service to 40 families.
- Collaborating with Hyde Square Task Force as they supported 20 youth leaders in assembling grocery bags in the service of about 80 families and individuals.
- Supporting youth connected to Lynn’s YMCA in serving about 100 teens experiencing homelessness in their area through the distribution of winter clothing and hygiene products.
- Staff and youth of Young Man with a Plan assembled 100 bags for young people with warm winter gear
- Supporting the Lynn branch of Girls Inc. as they assembled food packages to be distributed amongst 100 families.
- Most recently, and distinct from the “Kids-Helping-Kids” programs prompted by the holiday season, the Foundation worked with Cristo Rey Boston High School. Ale, the Foundation’s high-school intern from Cristo Rey, organized and helped distribute 67 bags of hygiene products amongst her fellow 10th graders. Working as an intermediary between her school’s dean and the Foundation team, Ale demonstrated what the Foundation hopes to foster in the future with “Kids-Helping-Kids” – staff guided youth leadership.

To learn more visit the our Kids Helping Kids webpage: [someoneelseschild.org/kids-helping-kids](https://someoneelseschild.org/kids-helping-kids)

How to get involved:

- [Donate](#) funding to support a “Kids-Helping-Kids” event via our website or mail:
  - Visit our website: [someoneelseschild.org/donate](https://someoneelseschild.org/donate)
  - Mail a donation to: Someone Else’s Child, 594 Columbia Road, Suite 211, Dorchester, MA 02125
  - Email: Katrina at [kbrink@someoneelseschild.org](mailto:kbrink@someoneelseschild.org) with questions!
- Donate goods to support a “Kids-Helping-Kids” event (e.g., grocery store gift cards, personal care items) Email: Genesis at [gbautista@someoneelseschild.org](mailto:gbautista@someoneelseschild.org)
- Attend a “Kids-Helping-Kids” event! Email: Genesis at [gbautista@someoneelseschild.org](mailto:gbautista@someoneelseschild.org)