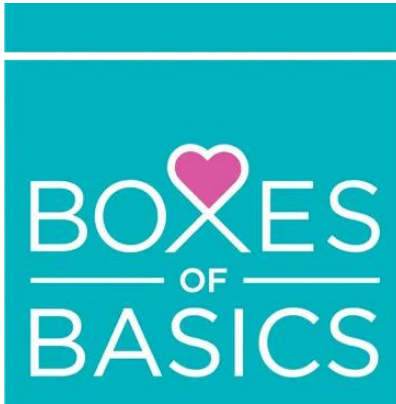




Volunteer Handbook

Version 1.0 | July 2026

Welcome to Boxes of Basics! We are so glad you are here. This handbook is required reading before your first shift. It covers who we are, what to expect as a volunteer, and the standards we follow so that every child who receives a Box or Bundle of Basics gets a high-quality wardrobe that they will be proud of.

Please read this handbook in full and reach out to your Volunteer Coordinator with any questions. Thank you for giving your time to the children and families we serve.

Our Story

Boxes of Basics was founded in 2018 by stay-at-home mom Sarah Tyndall. She had the opportunity to help a mom of four who had left a difficult situation and needed clothing for her children. Sarah began collecting clothing from friends and neighbors, and before she knew it, she had enough clothing to fill her SUV twice.

That experience taught Sarah three things: there were local children who needed clothing, there were plenty of people willing to help, and the quality of the clothing she collected was excellent. Some pieces were hardly worn and in wonderful condition.

The idea for Boxes of Basics was born. What started in our founder's basement grew into our headquarters in Manassas, Virginia. As our impact has expanded, so has our footprint. Today, we proudly operate from two locations—our headquarters in Manassas and a satellite location in Remington, Virginia—allowing us to serve even more children and families across Prince William, Manassas, Manassas Park, and Fauquier County.

We've now packed and delivered more than 10,000 Boxes and Bundles of Basics to local children and families — and counting!

The children we serve are referred to us by school social workers, churches, other nonprofits, and community organizations. Every Box and Bundle includes school and play clothes, a dress up outfit, pajamas, new shoes, socks and underwear, a hygiene kit, and age-appropriate books, and every outfit is selected, wrapped, and labeled with care, because when a child opens a Box or Bundle of Basics, we want it to feel like a gift.

What to Expect as a Volunteer

Parking

- Put on a nametag. If you do not have a printed nametag, let a staff member or shift lead know and one will be made for you.
- If it is your first time volunteering, a shift lead will walk you through our story and give you a tour of the facility before you get started.
- Water and snacks are available. Please help yourself.

Boxes of Basics can involve standing, bending, and lifting. Please wear closed-toe shoes and comfortable clothing.

Volunteer Conduct

- Treat every donated item, every child's box, and every fellow volunteer with care and respect.
- Our sites hold personal information about the families we serve (referral forms, addresses, and similar details). Please keep anything you see about a specific family confidential.
- Follow the direction of shift leads and staff on duty. They are there to help you have a great, productive shift.
- Please let a shift lead know before you leave if a supply is running low.

Safety

- A first aid kit is located on site. Ask a shift lead if you're not sure where.
- In a medical emergency, call 911 first, then let your shift lead know.

What You'll Be Doing

As a volunteer, you'll spend most of your time doing two things: sorting donated clothing and packing Boxes and Bundles of Basics for local kids. Here's what you need to know about both, starting with sorting and organizing.

Sorting Donations

We want every child to receive clothes they feel confident in and that will last them the whole season. We only keep high-quality clothing that you would be proud to wear, or have your own kids wear.

We Do NOT Accept:

- Ripped, dirty, smelly, dingy, or stained clothing
- Adult clothing, except sweatshirts and coats — we do accept those in adult sizes
- Clothing with a family relationship word on it (mom, dad, sister, brother, aunt, etc.)
- Holiday clothing, including Halloween, 4th of July, Thanksgiving, and other holiday-themed items (winter-themed clothing is fine to keep)
 - *Even widely celebrated holidays shorten how long a child can wear the item — a 4th of July shirt or a Thanksgiving turkey sweater is really only wearable for a couple of weeks a year, which isn't the full seasonal wardrobe we're aiming to provide.*
- Sports gear or paraphernalia, except local professional teams (Spirit, Commanders, Wizards, Capitals)
- School, club, or camp clothing, except colleges and universities
- Shoes that are not new, or any shoe that is not a sneaker (no flip flops, boots, Crocs, etc.)
- Bathing suits and snow pants

New-Only Items

Shoes, socks, and underwear must always be new. Shoes must also be sneakers — we do not accept flip flops, boots, Crocs, or other shoe types, even if new. Please do not shelve or pack gently used shoes, socks, or underwear, even if they look to be in excellent condition.

A Note on Laundering

In some cases, we do keep pieces to be laundered: high-quality clothes, coats, or hoodies that are in great shape and would be keepable once washed. If you find a piece like this, set it aside for laundering rather than donating it — ask a shift lead if you're not sure.

If you find an item we cannot accept, place it in a donate bin. It will still help someone, just not through Boxes of Basics.

Shelving Best Practices

- Check the size charts posted at the shelves for equivalents. For example, a small is equivalent to a children's size 5, so a shirt labeled "small" belongs on the size 5 shelf.
- Always shelve on the smaller of the two sizes. If an item could be a size 6 or 7, shelve it as a 6. We want these clothes to last all season, so we shelve conservatively.
- Watch out for adult sizes. Kids' and adult sizing sometimes use the same numbers, so don't judge by the number alone: check the fit and the label. If it's an adult size, donate it, unless it's a sweatshirt or coat, since we accept those in adult sizes. Shelve adult sweatshirts and coats in the adult-size section.
- Is the shelf full? Put the item in backstock. Determine if the item is for summer or winter and put it in the corresponding tub. If you need help finding or organizing the backstock bins, ask a shift lead or staff member for assistance.
- Keep shelves neat and tidy as you go. Fold or hang items instead of stacking loosely, and straighten a shelf if you notice it's gotten messy, even if it's not the one you're working on.

Book Selection & Retention Policy

Every Box and Bundle includes books, so when sorting donated books:

- Keep: Books recommended for readers ages 12 and under, in clean, excellent condition.
- Trade: Books recommended for readers ages 13 and up. These are traded through the McKay's trade-in program for more books for our kids.
- Review: If you're unsure of a book's age or have concerns about its content, place it in the Review bin for the Volunteer Librarian.

Packing a Box or Bundle of Basics

A Box of Basics and a Bundle of Basics are not the same thing, so check which one you're packing before you start:

 Box of Basics	 Bundle of Basics
✓ Full seasonal wardrobe ✓ Sneakers ✓ Socks & underwear ✓ Seasonally appropriate coat ✓ Hygiene kit ✓ 2 age-appropriate books <i>Sizes Newborn – Kids 16</i>	✓ Sneakers ✓ Socks & underwear ✓ Seasonally appropriate coat ✓ Hygiene kit ✓ 2 age-appropriate books <i>For kids wearing adult sizes. Bundles do not include a full seasonal wardrobe.</i>

- Pack your Box of Basics with care.
- Choose items that mix, match, and coordinate.
- Think carefully about the items you include. You are responsible for giving this child an entire seasonal wardrobe.

- You are our last quality check, so look at each item carefully. We only include clothes that kids will be proud to wear. If it does not meet our standards, donate it.
- Stick to the checklist. Most of our kids have siblings we're also packing for, so it's important that each box is uniform and equivalent.
- Think of your Box of Basics as a present for the child.
- Include the child's name in the Packed with Love note. The note should be personal, and should not include religious content. Do not reference the family's specific circumstances (for example, why they were referred, or details about their housing or living situation) since this can be sensitive information for the family.
- If an item on the checklist is not available, do not make a substitution. Let your shift lead know — they will add a note to the box, and the box will not be closed until the missing item has been added.
- Make sure the waiver and survey are included at the top of the box.

Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook and for volunteering with Boxes of Basics. Your time and care make it possible for local children to open a box that feels like a gift. If you have questions about anything in this handbook, please reach out to your Volunteer Coordinator:

- Prince William County / Headquarters (Manassas): Ashley Rodman — ashley@boxesofbasics.org
- Fauquier County (Remington): Dawn Trafton — dawn@boxesofbasics.org