



I Belong Bags Foundation
Dignity for Children in Crisis

IBB on [Facebook](#) | IBB on [IG](#) | IBB on [LinkedIn](#)

www.ibelongbags.com

info@ibelongbags.com

Calgary, Alberta and area

Dear Teacher!

If you are reading this, you have a very kind-hearted and generous student who was inspired to take action helping vulnerable children and youth in Calgary. They are bravely asking for your help facilitating a donation drive in their classroom on our behalf.

I Belong Bags is a grass roots non-profit organization started in a grade 1 classroom in 2018. We support vulnerable children and youth by providing them with backpacks filled with essential and comfort items to children and youth who may have had to leave their current residence with nothing but the clothes on their backs or a garbage bag filled with their belongings. The psychological impact of this can last a lifetime in a young person's heart and mind and is the moment we are working to disrupt and replace with connection, bravery and belonging and resiliency.

Since Covid, the demand for our services has significantly increase. We have doubled the agencies we are supporting and since May 2022, we have seen a 500% + increase in the number of backpacks we have delivered since last year. Here are a few of the youth agencies we support:

- Centre for Newcomers
- The Children's Cottage
- Luna Child and Youth Advocacy Centre
- Office of the Child and Youth Advocate
- TsuuTina Nation Police Services

I Belong Bags is a supporter of National Child Day contributing our Raising Empathy School Program in partnership with Starlings Community. Our goal is to raise empathy by empowering youth in our communities. Please ask us for a copy of our curriculum. It does not matter how old you are, you are able to make a difference to kids just like you who are in need of a helping hand. If applicable, the student sharing this letter with you will receive a reference letter identifying their keen leadership skills, and thank them for the kindness and empathy they have demonstrated by helping children and youth in Calgary.

The next pages outline the process for a donation drive, along with letters templates to families for the two different drive options. Thank you for considering supporting this student's mission to help the vulnerable children and youth in our city.

For additional information, you can find more info about I Belong Bags at the links below:

- <https://www.facebook.com/ibelongbags/>
- www.ibelongbags.com (*under construction*)
- [CTV Interview 2020](#)
- [CBC Calgary Eyeopener | Live Radio Interview | June 2022](#)
- [CBC Calgary | Article | June 2022](#)
- [Calgary Citizen | Article | June 2022](#)



I Belong Bags Team



BUILD A BAG FOR BELONGING: Classroom Donation Drive

STEP 1: WHAT KIND OF DONATION DRIVE WOULD YOU LIKE TO HOST?

- **OPTION 1: COMPLETE FILLED BACKPACKS:** Choose how many backpacks and for what age ranges your students would like to take on filling. Students can enroll their families and friends to purchase the backpacks and items that go into them from the list provided.
 - Age ranges newborn – age 18
 - Boys/Girls/Gender Neutral options
 - Challenge other classrooms in your school to beat your goal with the winner indulging in a movie marathon or pizza day!

- **OPTION 2: COLLECT INDIVIDUAL ITEMS:** Simply collect the individual items for the backpacks with a focus on our most needed items and we will pack the bags at our facility afterwards. And...you could still challenge other classes to surpass the number of items collected!
 - PJ's all ages (gender neutral items are a great to have)
 - Blankets (gender neutral items are a great to have)
 - Baby items: baby wash, lotion and diaper cream
 - Toiletries: deodorants, 2-in-1 children soap, disposable face wipes
 - Books: baby board books, age 12+ appropriate books

STEP 2: TIMELINE

- Select a timeline for your drive. It can be a week, a month, over the course of a particular curriculum unit - whatever works best for your classroom! Alternatively, you can set a goal "15 full backpacks", "50 female and male deodorants", "20 blankets".

STEP 3: SPREAD THE WORD

- Have students organize and write a handout to take home and email parents, make posters to put up in the community and around the school, share on school's social media pages, get the students involved by having conversations about empathy for others, and what it looks like to be a positive member of the community.

STEP 4: DURING THE DRIVE

- Take pictures, document student comments, reactions and feelings having participated directly in impacting other children in their community.
- Create a video you would use to post on social media sharing the impact your students participated in and which groups triumphed in any friendly challenges.
- We'd love to have permission to post pictures/videos and share stories from your class. If this is something your class and parents agree to, please ensure your privacy rules for students are followed when submitting your materials to us.

STEP 5: When your drive is complete, send an email to info@ibelongbags.com to let us know you have items ready for pick up, and we will come to your school to collect.



OPTION 1: LETTER TO THE FAMILIES

Hello Families,

Our classroom is running a donation drive for a community-based non-profit called I Belong Bags that supports Calgary children and youth in crisis.

Sometimes a child in crisis may need to leave home suddenly for various reasons. They often leave with nothing but the clothes on their backs or a disposable bag holding their belongings. I Belong Bags provides dignity in a backpack filled with new comfort and essential items of their very own to help them feel connected to community, know they belong, are loved, and can be brave no matter their circumstance. They collect for all age ranges from newborn to age 18 and are in desperate need of help this year.

Our classroom’s goal is to donate _____ backpacks

- 1. Find a backpack:** Start with a new average-sized backpack.
- 2. Who are you packing for?** A girl, boy, or a gender-neutral bag, and the age. Attach the tag below to the outside of the bag.
- 3. Fill with gifts:** Each backpack contains a pair of pajamas, small blanket, toiletries, reading book, colouring or sketchbook, colouring utensils, writing utensils, and “WOW” items. This can include fun toys, stuffed animals, school supplies, accessories, crafts. Place liquids and toothbrushes/paste inside ziploc baggies.

INFANT (NB – Age 2)	CHILD 3-9 YEARS OLD	YOUTH AGES 10+
Pajamas (newborn to 18-24 months) Baby Blanket Baby Shampoo Baby Body Wash Baby Lotion Diapers & Wipes Diaper Ointment or Baby Powder Baby Bibs Baby Washcloths Toddler Safe Stuffed Animal Board Book Toy or Gift Card (as available)	Pajamas (3T-9) Small Blanket Toothbrush Toothpaste Shampoo & Conditioner Body Lotion* Soap or Body Wash Stuffed Animal Coloring Book & Crayons Empowering book Toy or Gift Card (as available)	Sleepwear (Child Size 10 to Adult XXL) Small Soft Blanket Toothbrush Toothpaste Shampoo & Conditioner Body Lotion/Soap or Body Wash Deodorant Feminine Hygiene Products Age appropriate teenage comfort item Journal, Pens, & Pencils Empowering book Gift Card (as available)

4. Send the full backpack to school with your student by: _____

For more information or ways your family can contribute, please visit I Belong Bags online at www.ibelongbags.com



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OPTION 2: LETTER TO THE FAMILIES

Hello Families,

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Our classroom is collecting the following items:

Please send items to school with your student by: _____

For more information or ways your family can help, please visit I Belong Bags online at www.ibelongbags.com

Thank you for supporting the vulnerable children and youth in our city.



OPTION 2: BACKPACK TAGS

please complete for each filled backpack. Print t

I BELONG BAGS – Build a Bag for Belonging: Select gender and age of backpack you are gifting and attach this tag to the backpack.

AGE: Months: _____ Years: _____

GENDER: Boy Girl Gender Neutral

GIFTED FROM: _____ **Date:** _____



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