

### Red Apple Supplies: Tools Kids Need to Succeed

*"Boca Grove, thank you for caring,"* that was the message from James Gavrilos, the President/CEO of the Education Foundation of Palm Beach County. The local nonprofit has numerous programs that support schools, students and teachers, ensuring they have the supplies they need to succeed, especially in learning and literacy. "It's imperative that we give every kid a chance to get a book in their hands. If a child drops out of school, they are 69% more likely to be incarcerated," Gavrilos said, sharing that the state of Texas decides how many prisons they will build based on third-grade reading scores.

Shocked by the statistic, the employees from Boca Grove were even more amazed to learn that in wealthy Palm Beach County, 1-5 kids live below the poverty level, and nearly 40k students do not have the money to buy backpacks and school supplies. Armed with this knowledge, they felt even more enthused to volunteer their time as part of General Manager Jennifer Jolly's *Boca Grove Cares initiative*. "It's great. I like that she did this. It's excellent team building, and it's good to get to know my colleagues on a more personal level," said Soraida Gonzalez, a 19-year employee who was loading up notebooks, glue sticks and copy paper for teachers to pick up from the Red Apple Supplies store. "I have a granddaughter who goes to a school where many families rely on an organization like this." *Little did she know that her co-worker, who she was teammates with at the warehouse, was one of them.*

It was a new beginning for the Talamantes family. Having just moved from Chicago to South Florida, all they wanted was for their daughter Isabella to fit in at her new public school, but as Claudia, a Golf Course Administrative Assistant, remembers, they could not afford a new backpack and all of the other necessities the teacher requested for her third-grade class. "We were starting from zero." Like any mother, she wanted her daughter to have the best, but circumstances were difficult until she learned of the generosity of this nonprofit. "We were grateful. It was



important that she have everything the other kids had.” Now, six years later, Claudia and her family have come full circle. Instead of standing in line for a backpack, she is filling them up for other families and writing encouraging notes of appreciation to students and teachers who receive them. “It feels good thinking that one of these backpacks can end up at my daughter’s school and make a difference to another child.”

**Making a difference**, it’s what Jolly instills in her team each day, whether it’s creating memorable member experiences or giving back to the community they call home. “It’s great to see my team help teachers educate our students. Teachers often spend their own money (\$587 on average per year) to buy supplies, but with organizations like the Education Foundation, teachers can focus on teaching and helping our students create a brighter future. I am so proud of my team for wanting to create change.”

## More to the Story for Members

The Education Foundation depends on donations and the generosity of community members to help our students thrive. Their big event is in July, when they load up thousands of backpacks for each grade level with the necessary supplies for families and students in need, no questions asked. On July 25, our team will return to Red Apple to help get our kids’ school year started out right.

**You can help us in a few different ways:**

Join our team: <https://fundraise.givesmart.com/vf/Backpacks2023/team/BocaGrove>

Donate to our team effort: <https://fundraise.givesmart.com/vf/Backpacks2023/team/BocaGrove>

Amazon Wish List: [https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2DPCPB-PW8ECIO/ref=hz\\_ls\\_biz\\_ex?redirectFromSmile=1](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2DPCPB-PW8ECIO/ref=hz_ls_biz_ex?redirectFromSmile=1)

