The current pandemic may have dramatically changed everyone’s lives, but it didn't change the fact that when elementary school children at Title 1 schools in Maricopa County are able to return to school, they will need uniforms, backpacks, supplies and clothes. A fact that is being amplified by the Back to School Clothing Drive leadership.
“We will fulfill our promise to provide school clothing, uniforms, backpacks, school supplies and other essential items for elementary school-aged students, their families and schools, even with the challenges COVID-19 has presented,” said Back to School Clothing Drive (BTSCD) executive director Karl Gentles. “Yes, we’ve had to adapt to the virus like everyone else while still being able to provide these essential needs to between 3,500 and 4,000 children. Even with a drop in fund-raising support during this very difficult time, we are committed to our mission and to the children.”

Gentles said that BTSCD, Arizona's largest provider of uniforms, backpacks and supplies, has converted from its annual on-site distribution to 5,000 Title 1 students at Grand Canyon University to:

- A drive-by distribution event serving 1,000 Luke Air Force Base families on July 23 in a collaboration with Fighter Country Partnership and the BHHS Legacy Foundation;
- Delivering requested supplies for 2,000 students to specific Title 1 schools in Maricopa County;
- Delivering supplies to 600 children in foster care in partnership with Arizona Helping Hands;
- Delivering supplies for 400 children who may be homeless or in transition through Children's First Academy and Sequoia Choice Charter School in Mesa.

Families at Luke Air Force Base and families whose children attend Title 1 and other participating schools had to pre-register for Back to School Clothing Drive support.

“Throughout the rest of the year, we will continue providing support to other schools and districts through direct delivery of supplies,” Gentles said, adding that “we are still in need of both financial support and donations of supplies which can be done online.”

Visit backtoschoolclothingdrive.com for additional information.

The organization shared that sponsors who have made significant cash and in-kind sponsorship support for the current year include BHHS Legacy Foundation, Bank of America, Arizona's Family 3TV and CBS5, Arizona Community Foundation, Charles Schwab, Discover Financial, Fiesta Bowl Charities, Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust and Wells Fargo Bank. Bank of America, a long-time BTSCD partner, added a second cash sponsorship to underwrite the cost of this year’s school supplies since the bank could not host its annual company-wide employee supply drive.