

**UNITED WAY OF THE OHIO VALLEY  
UNION COUNTY  
PARTNER AGENCY: HAPPY FEET, INC.**

Some people may think that high quality athletic shoes are silly and that any old shoe is all that a student needs. Some students come to school wearing hand-me-downs that are either too big or too small or almost worn out. Almost all the shoes that these students own are not new and you can tell were not professionally fitted. Our volunteers see the drastic need first-hand when we do measuring day and fitting day. Students need to be dressed like their classmates to feel good about themselves and their self-worth.

On the recent fitting day this past October we had a day of torrential on and off rain all day and as I moved from one elementary school to another to help with fitting, I was wet and excited to deliver new socks and shoes. Today the students were getting the new shoes they had waited for and some not patiently. One FRYSC director told me that every day at least one student would ask "Is this the day I get my new shoes?" So the excitement had been building since the measuring day about five weeks before. For some the last time they had a new pair of shoes may have been the ones Happy Feet had purchased the fall before. I noticed that some of the shoes the students had on that day were the same brand and color from the year before. Typically the style or color is not repeated in consecutive years.

Students could hardly wait to get their socks and shoes off and we insisted they put on a new pair of socks along with their new shoes. When a pair does not fit as they should, it is really difficult to explain to a young child that we need to take the shoes back for a different size. The student tries to convince us that the fit is fine, but sometimes the measuring is a little off or the feet have just grown more than expected in that "long waiting time". I promised the students that day that I would do the returns the very next day and they would get shoes the same week. These were the comments I heard from elementary students, "Do I get to keep these? Who pays for these? I love them! I never want to take them off! They feel so good! I can jump high in these. I feel like I'm walking on clouds!" They proudly wore those new shoes that fit back to class to show them off to their classmates. We had one young student who came into the library to get his new shoes and he was not on the list to get shoes. He saw others getting new shoes and thought he would join the group. Two students wanted to put their old shoes back on because they were going to have to walk up a dirt lane and did not want to get the shoes muddy because, "they're new". On that wet October day nothing could rain on the parade of more than 375 Union County students who went home with new shoes and socks and a big smile on their face. One fifth grade student did a dance for us that day and it is still posted on the Union County Happy Feet Face book page as "The Happy Feet Dance". Thanks to United Way and all supporters for helping us help the needy and disadvantaged.

**WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL YOUR INVESTMENT MAKE?**

With your investment of \$100 **Happy Feet, Inc.** can:

- Purchase 3 pairs of athletic shoes for students in need.
- Purchase socks to use on measuring and or fitting day.
- Purchase 3 pairs of shoes appropriate for graduation ceremonies.

