

## **Beverly's Birthdays delivers cheer to individuals receiving DHS homeless supports**

For many, a birthday party or baby shower may seem like an expected treat; however, for families facing a crisis, these celebrations are often challenging, or even impossible, to arrange.

In 2015, DHS Homeless Services and Supports (HSS) partnered with Beverly's Birthdays, a local nonprofit with a mission to spread birthday cheer 365 days a year, to create lasting memories for local families who are displaced. Monthly, Beverly's Birthdays provides HSS, which operates out of the Office of Community Relations (OCR), with "birthday cheer bins" to distribute to children celebrating a birthday that month. Each bin contains approximately \$50 worth of gender- and age-appropriate gifts that are customized to the child's likes and preferences. The boxes also include practical items such as books and toothbrushes.

"It's hard to feel 'normal' when your life is up in the air. These children are dealing with heavy situations. They are feeling left out," said Megs Yunn, founder of Beverly's Birthdays. "I want to dump glitter on the city of Pittsburgh and bring joy to as many children and families as possible, and I'm glad that we are able to work with organizations like DHS to make that happen!"

In addition to birthday cheer bins, Beverly's Birthdays donates "itty bitty birthday cheer bins" for new and expectant mothers. Included in the bins are essential items for newborn babies such as diapers, wipes, clothing, bottles and toys. HSS staff often bring the bins to the hospital, providing the new mother with necessities before she and baby are discharged.

"When families are facing a crisis, their days are often filled with stress and anxiety," said Kristen Armstrong, HSS supervisor. "It's important to recognize milestones, and these birthday and baby shower cheer bins distract from the negativity the families are facing. In the midst of not knowing what your housing will look like, a little bit of joy goes a long way."

More than 50 birthday and baby bags were received by Homeless Services and Supports in 2016.