

Governor Carney, Lt. Governor Hall-Long, and the Big Fish Charitable Foundation Announce Partnership with Basic Needs Closets

Big Fish Charitable Foundation will focus fundraising efforts for the Basic Needs Closets program



Governor John Carney and Lieutenant Governor Bethany Hall-Long on Thursday announced a new partnership with [Big Fish Charitable Foundation](#) to help Delaware schools stock [Basic Needs Closets](#). These closets provide elementary and middle school students across the state with increased access to free products – such as school supplies, hygiene products, and other essentials – to meet students' needs so they can effectively participate and learn in the classroom.

Through the partnership with the Lieutenant Governor's Office, Big Fish Charitable Foundation will hold events and fundraising promotions at Big Fish Restaurant Group establishments to provide additional funding to help stock Basic Needs Closets.

"The Basic Needs Closets program helps Delaware schools stock basic resources that many of us take for granted so children can focus on learning in the classroom," said **Governor Carney**. "We launched this program to address the obstacles that students face in school when their basic needs are not met. Thank you to Lieutenant Governor Hall-Long for taking the reins of this initiative, and to the Big Fish Charitable Foundation for joining the many partners supporting Basic Needs Closets and making a difference in the lives of Delaware children."

The Basic Needs Closets, [which launched in August 2017 in 43 high-need schools](#) across the state, are a result of [the coordinated efforts](#) of Delaware educators, Delaware businesses, Delaware healthcare institutions, and a partnership with [First Book](#).

"We know that the physical and emotional health of our students is directly related to their success and ability to learn," said **Lt. Governor Bethany Hall-Long**. "The partnership with The Big Fish Charitable

Foundation and the Basic Needs Closets program will allow us to continue to serve students across our state and provide them with the best chance to achieve and become stronger and healthier.”

“The Basic Needs School Closet Program is a great program; it’s a perfect fit for our foundation. It allows us to help a lot of children and it’s a program that has a lot of room for growth, which will allow us to keep growing as a charitable organization,” said **Brian Mann, Executive Director of Big Fish Charitable Foundation**. “We couldn’t be more thrilled to be partnering with the Governor and Lt. Governor’s Office in their efforts to make free basic need items available for the kids that need them the most.”

The Big Fish Charitable Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization created in 2013 by brothers and co-founders of the Big Fish Restaurant Group, Norman and Eric Sugrue, and the Group’s Vice-President, Holly Monaco. The mission of the Foundation is to engage in charitable work that benefits children in need.

Each school’s basic needs closet is stocked with products identified by districts and charter schools as essential to the well-being of their students. Students are able to discreetly access the closets throughout the school year. The initiative aims to meet students’ basic needs with dignity so they can be ready to learn in class.

“This generous support perfectly reflects the kind of business and community partnerships our schools need,” said **Secretary of Education Susan Bunting**. “The Basic Needs Closets provide essential supplies -- such as clothing, school supplies, and hygiene products -- to children who otherwise would go without. Children can access the supplies discreetly and with dignity, providing them what they need so they can concentrate on learning.”