

Back Bay Woman Brings School Uniforms to Kids in Developing Countries

Her organization Tailored for Education, launched in December, has already committed aid to more than 11,000 children in developing countries.

By [Craig Meyer](#) March 13, 2012



For Back Bay resident Megan Kelly, who wore them from kindergarten through high school, school uniforms are a simple enough concept.

But one day when a friend casually asked her if she knew that children in Tanzania were required to wear uniforms to go to school, she was caught off guard.

“I had worn uniforms for a very long time and had absolutely no idea what a need it was in developing countries,” Kelly said. “After that, I started doing a bunch of research and learned that it’s mandatory in a ton of different developing countries – Haiti, most of the African countries, Cambodia.”

Almost a year removed from that realization, Kelly is now one of the co-founders of Tailored for Education, a local non-profit that strives to increase school enrollment by providing children in developing countries with school uniforms.

Not long ago, Kelly was going through business school at Boston College and making the rounds as a trader at a private investment firm, a job that she still holds today.

Having graduated from business school, she wanted to do something else in her free time, and for Kelly, she felt her new path needed to be about something other than herself.

After looking into a slew of volunteer opportunities, Kelly told her friend Jessica Roy last May about the children in Tanzania and from there, the two joined up as founders and Tailored for Education was born.

“It just seemed like a very low cost problem that could be very easily fixed,” Kelly said. “A uniform is just very simply made -- it’s not something that should be keeping children from going to school.”

The organization started fundraising in December and has already been able to make a profound impact in a relatively short period of time.

Partnering with established non-governmental organizations, Tailored for Education has committed aid to over 11,000 children in Haiti, El Salvador, Malawi, Cambodia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Additionally, it has future aid lined up for over 16,000 children in Lesotho, India, Haiti, Cameroon and Niger.

Kelly has not yet had the chance to go abroad and see her group's impact firsthand, but she's well aware of the enormous difference the uniforms have made.

"Even children who are living in tent camps in Haiti put their uniform over the rafters at night to keep them fresh for the next morning," Kelly said. "When you hear stories like that, it's not about the uniforms – it's about how much these children value their education."

Looking towards the future, Kelly sees exponential growth for Tailored for Education because of its unique status as a low-cost organization that provides what she calls "a high touch."

With the average uniform cost between \$16 and \$22 dollars, without even spending much, someone can make an indelible impact in a child's life. And, for Kelly, that's what makes her organization and its mission so special.

"Obviously, there are lots of different barriers that keep children out of school," Kelly said, "but if we can get rid of one of them, then we would definitely be doing a service to a lot of families around the world."

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