
WilmerHale, Kettering Backpack Develop New Community Partnership

MARCH 12, 2015

WilmerHale and [Kettering Backpack Inc.](#) (KBI) are pleased to announce a philanthropic partnership through which the law firm will provide KBI with financial support, volunteer service, in-kind donations, and pro bono legal representation. WilmerHale has already begun working with KBI—a nonprofit organization dedicated to fighting childhood hunger within the Kettering city school district—to make a positive impact on the community.

Currently more than 3,000 Kettering students participate in the free and reduced lunch programs. KBI discreetly provides more than 500 of the most at-risk students a bag of healthy food at the end of each week throughout the school year to sustain their nutritional needs over the weekend when school meals are not available.

Through this philanthropic partnership, KBI will receive \$25,000 per year for two years, as well as in-kind support, including use of WilmerHale office space, donations of office materials, professional training for staff, and volunteer support during KBI events and activities.

"When the firm's Community Service Committee gathered to identify a new partnership in Ohio—we received numerous worthy suggestions," says Public Service Manager Anne Bowie. "It was Discovery Attorney [Summer Hawks](#), along with Discovery Attorney Professional Development Specialist [Becky Owen](#), current KBI board members, who shared that 42 percent of Kettering's children are at risk of experiencing hunger. We were astonished and immediately compelled to help the people in the community in which our office resides."

Mrs. Hawks says KBI impacts not only the students' nutritional well-being, but their education as well. "On Monday mornings when students come to school with a headache because they haven't eaten, or they're lethargic, that can become an educational interference," she explains. "There's a hidden poverty problem in Kettering, and partnering with KBI allows us to have a hands-on role in addressing this pressing need."

Ms. Owen explains that the nonprofit was a perfect fit for how the firm has designed community partnerships. "It is our goal to help our community partners excel at their mission. This partnership will help KBI to meet growing demand, increase community awareness, and ensure sustainability

in order to serve those in need."

WilmerHale's first effort was a successful "Peanut Butter Blitz Challenge." In less than two weeks, 250 attorneys and staff in the firm's [Dayton office](#) collected 800 jars of peanut butter—two months worth of need—valued at approximately \$3,000.

"WilmerHale's impact is already visible. The hundreds of jars of donated peanut butter is just a glimpse into what the firm is able to provide us," says KBI Board Member and Volunteer Administrator for the City of Kettering Bonnie Pittl. "With this partnership, I can confidently say that KBI is finally a sustained program. While we continue to need and welcome further resources made available to us, we now have a good start in utilizing the help and resources needed to keep filling this need in our community."

On Monday, March 16 at 5:30 p.m., WilmerHale attorneys and staff will gather at the Christ United Methodist Church in Kettering, to assist in packaging food for student distribution.

Outside of the KBI partnership, WilmerHale's firmwide innovative [Community Partnership Model](#) harnesses the power of attorneys and staff in all offices, to make a decisive impact on issues facing local communities. Through this focused model, the firm concentrates resources on a specific group of organizations for multi-year cycles, with an eye toward long-term relationship and capacity building. It lends enhanced organizational and financial stability, serving the communities hand-in-hand with the organizations. The partnership provides increased visibility and ability to leverage additional funding sources and to improve infrastructure and capacity-building of the nonprofit organizations.