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## Campaign starts to provide school uniforms Shop would serve low-income families in South Bend schools.

By **JOSEPH DITS** *Tribune Staff Writer*

SOUTH BEND -- As every school year begins, there are students in South Bend schools who show up wearing things like flip-flops on their feet -- definitely not in the school uniform.

Students say they don't have the right shoes at home, explains Rosalind Ellis, director of student services for the South Bend Community School Corp.

"Oftentimes we have children who've never had a new shirt," she says.

But starting this summer, the school corporation will open The Look Smart Shoppe, where low-income families will be able to pick out a school uniform for free.

About 6,000 students will be eligible to shop there, Ellis says, because they receive free or reduced-price school lunches at the 19 schools that require uniforms. To stock that shop, the Indiana Toll Road, radio station B100 (WBYT) and Gaylor Electric announced a campaign Wednesday to raise money to buy the uniforms.

Out of \$10 spent on a new iZoom transponder, \$1 will go to the shop -- along with however much extra the buyer wants to donate. Also, current iZoom pass holders will be able to donate when they reload their passes. All of that can be done via the website [www.getizoom.com](http://www.getizoom.com).

School officials say about \$15 buys a complete uniform: shirt, pants, socks and underwear.

If there's enough money, Ellis says, the shop will offer shoes, too.

The shop will open in mid-August for three days a week at first. But Ellis hopes that will grow to daily hours as the school year goes on. B100 will be the primary radio station to air ads and announcements about the campaign, says Deb Williams, director of B100's owner, Federated Media.

### Looking at the shop

**Donate directly:** You can send a check to buy new school uniforms for low-income students. Make the check out to South Bend Community School Corp. and write "The Look Smart Shoppe" on the memo line. Send to the school corporation at 215 S. St. Joseph St., South Bend, IN 46601. You also can buy new uniform clothing (shirt, pants, underwear or shoes) and drop it off at the same address in downtown. All donations are tax deductible.

**Take the Toll Toad:** Indiana Toll Road customers can donate to the shop via the website [www.getizoom.com](http://www.getizoom.com).

**Which students will qualify for The Look Smart Shoppe?** They must qualify for free or reduced lunch at the 19 South Bend schools that require uniforms.

**Which schools are those?** Riley and Washington high schools; Brown, Dickinson, Greene, Jackson, LaSalle, Marshall and Navarre intermediate centers; and Coquillard, Hamilton, Harrison, Kennedy, Lafayette, Lincoln, Madison, Perley, Tarkington and Wilson primary centers.

**When and where will the shop be?** That is still being arranged. It's expected to open in mid-August.

**How will families shop at The Look Smart Shoppe?** They'll need to be registered for a visit. Once school starts, they'll need to go through their school social worker. But, starting July 1, they can just call the hot line (574) 283-8065 and leave a message.

**Volunteers needed:** The school corporation is seeking parents who are willing to staff the shop as volunteers. To do that, call (574) 283-8065.

**Gently used uniforms:** These may be donated at the individual schools that require uniforms. That's a separate program from the shop. Each school's uniform varies. For a description, find a

As a mom, she says she knows how kids end up with ripped pants, but "what I can't imagine is not having the resources to replace those ripped pants."

Gaylor Electric is donating about \$3,600 for the radio ads and \$400 for the uniforms. It's also asking its suppliers to add support, says George Reynolds, vice president of Gaylor's Michiana branch.

Gaylor, an electrical contracting company, has done a lot of work on the renovation/expansion of Monroe Primary Center. This is a way to give back to the school corporation because "they're good people to work with," Reynolds says.

If this project goes well, the Toll Road will consider extending it to the other six counties the highway cuts through, says Amber Scott, a Riley High School graduate and Toll Road public relations coordinator. The Toll Road has its main office in Granger.

Ellis says she'd seen a similar shop in Fort Wayne five years ago. It became possible here when the Toll Road came looking for a way to help students.

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