



Whirlpool Brand's Care Counts Program Delivers Essential Care As Students Face More Learning Barriers This School Year

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Now in more than 100 schools across the country, the Care Counts™ laundry program by Whirlpool continues to provide access to clean clothes for kids, during a time of increasing need

BENTON HARBOR, Mich., Sept. 14, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- For millions of students and their families, the COVID-19 pandemic has introduced unforeseen and extensive challenges this back-to-school season including the likelihood of distance learning in some capacity. While school districts across the country are taking different approaches to this fall's learning environment, a collective concern lingers: how to address anxiety around a growing need for basic necessities, which in turn, threatens to disrupt student focus, attendance, motivation and emotional well-being.

Whirlpool brand hopes to help address one of these needs by providing access to clean clothes for kids through its [Care Counts™ laundry program by Whirlpool](#). Now in its sixth year, the program has proven how access to clean clothes can positively impact the lives of thousands of students at-risk for absenteeism. During the 2019-2020 school year, the Care Counts™ laundry program enabled nearly 90% of participating high-risk elementary school students¹ to increase their attendance, proving how access to clean clothes can positively impact lives. It has grown to support 33 regions and 122 schools.

In an academic year that brings challenges associated with virtual learning, hybrid learning and social distancing within the classroom, Whirlpool has enlisted the help of Richard Rende, Ph. D., developmental psychologist, researcher, and educator to determine how success is measured. Over multiple touch points throughout the year, Dr. Rende will assess the impact of access to clean clothes against a variety of new criteria, including students' engagement beyond attendance, their social and emotional well-being, motivation, and presence and participation in their learning environments.

"A significant number of caregivers have felt the economic impact of COVID-19 and are finding it more difficult to provide basic necessities for their school-age children," said Richard Rende, Ph.D. "When students lack basic necessities like

food, shelter, clean clothes or hygiene products, anxieties about access to basic needs impact their ability to focus, regulate emotions and control behavior impulses. For children who are more likely to be chronically absent from school under normal circumstances, academic engagement will be even more difficult for them regardless of if in-person or remote."

In order to help students who depend on the Care Counts™ laundry program, Whirlpool brand, with support from Teach For America, is working with participating schools to find additional ways to ensure access to clean clothes for kids. Despite hybrid and virtual learning, many school locations will remain a central hub for families to pick up meals and launder their clothes in a safe environment.

"We created the Care Counts™ laundry program because a lack of access to clean clothes is a barrier to attending school," said Chelsey Whitehead, Senior Brand Manager of Whirlpool brand. "The program has grown to support 122 schools in 33 regions and given the current situation, it feels more important than ever to be able to provide resources that help. Over the summer, we listened to the school principals involved in this year's program, and we learned their students need basic necessities now more than ever before. We are humbled that the Care Counts™ laundry program can continue to help to fulfill a small but important need by providing access to clean clothes."

The Care Counts™ laundry program by Whirlpool has expanded its presence to six new regions in the 2020-2021 school year: Alabama, Arkansas, District of Columbia, Kentucky, Massachusetts, and Mississippi. Additionally, the program will continue to work with schools that are participating in a second year of the program in four regions: Cleveland, Jacksonville, Philadelphia and Phoenix.

Since its inception in 2015, the program has contributed to decreases in chronic absenteeism, and increases in attendance rates, grades and levels of self-esteem of participating at-risk students nationwide. In the 2019-2020 school year, nearly three out of four (73%) participating high-risk elementary students² were no longer at risk for chronic absenteeism following the program's implementation.

The Care Counts™ laundry program provides access to clean clothes in order to ensure basic needs are met and thus, remove one small, but important barrier to education. To learn more about the Care Counts™ laundry program, visit whirlpool.com/care-counts.

About Whirlpool Brand

For more than one hundred years, Whirlpool brand has been inspired by how people care for their families. Whirlpool brand is designing home appliances that are focused on improving how families give and get the care they need with the latest technologies and innovations – whether that means most flexible refrigerator storage for all types of family needs, induction technology for efficient cooking and easier cleaning, or laundry pairs that sense and adapt to clothes with the latest in connected technologies. Whirlpool brand created and continues outpacing goals of its Care Counts™ Laundry

Program, through which the brand is committed to helping create educational equality by installing washers and dryers in schools to help remove one small but important barrier to attendance – access to clean clothes. Whirlpool brand is part of Whirlpool Corporation, the world's leading manufacturer and marketer of major home appliances. For more information on Whirlpool, please visit whirlpool.com/everydaycare or find us on Facebook at facebook.com/whirlpoolusa or Twitter at [@WhirlpoolUSA](https://twitter.com/WhirlpoolUSA). Additional information about the company can be found at whirlpoolcorp.com.

About the Care Counts™ laundry program by Whirlpool Methodology

Whirlpool brand works with school teachers, administrators and Richard Rende, Ph.D., an internationally recognized developmental psychologist and researcher, to draw research-based connections between access to clean clothes and attendance rates by anonymously tracking student attendance, loads of laundry and grades. In 2020, owing to COVID-19 and remote-learning models, the program will track measures beyond attendance, such as participation in class (whether remote or in-person), engagement, demeanor and social-emotional well-being. For more information on the methodology, or to get access to the full meta-analysis, please contact media@whirlpool.com.

1 High-risk elementary school students is defined as elementary students who have missed 10% or more days of school during a reporting period

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