



## **Partnering with SOLES4SOULS – MAKING A DIFFERENCE - Taylor Van Zile**

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This year for my service project I chose to collect gently used shoes for an organization called Soles4Souls. In the past I had done a similar project and it worked out well so this seemed promising. The organization that I chose, Soles4Souls, has locations throughout the world distributing shoes to underprivileged people or disaster struck areas.

With this idea in mind I contacted a local running association called Ocean Running Club, seeking their assistance. With their approval I began collecting shoes early this summer at local running races and events. The Ocean Running Club has many members in my community and they hold multiple races throughout the area. With their awesome help I was allowed to bring a shoe collection bin to many of their races. Each morning of an event I would bring a shoe collection bin, and because of the great response I would have to empty it multiple times to keep it from overflowing. The Ocean Running Club also helped me get the word out about my project by allowing me to have information about my collection on their website, and included in their emails the dates that I would be at races collecting shoes. After attending six or seven races this summer I was able to collect 250 pairs of shoes to send to Soles4Souls. I had filled out a grant application at Julie Foudy Sports Leadership Academy and received grant money to allow me to ship all nine boxes of shoes to the Soles4Souls headquarters. This project was a great experience and I loved seeing how eager my community was to help me out along with donate shoes!

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