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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Back in the late 1970's I was on the staff of a fledgling battered women's shelter that was located on the second and third floors of a big apartment building in Auburn, Maine. I got myself there by way of a good friend who was passionately involved and thought I should be too, so she volunteered me! As it was, I ended up loving the work of initiating social change and helping people who were in dire need of protection and a friend to help them make their lives better...safer...more livable.

The advocates who worked with the women and children often held counseling sessions in the living room where the gas heater was, and because the gas heater was always acting up, I would often be called upon to re-light it...sitting on the floor holding the button in and lighting matches, hoping it would catch and we would warm up!

During those times I would sit quietly and listen. The stories I heard were shocking and I often wondered how people could endure such hardship and how I could have gotten so lucky. I had been loved and protected growing up and I had no concept of how difficult life might have been in the homes of my friends and neighbors. I loved that job. We were making a difference in the lives of battered women and their children and it was an honor to be there in that time and place.

After these sessions were over I would often emerge from behind the stove, go into my office and call my mother. She worked in a law firm and would sometimes answer the phone sounding a little frustrated that I had interrupted her. But I would say, "Mom, I just called to thank you." And she would say, "Thank me for what?" and I would answer, "For making sure I grew up safe, happy and secure." That was all. She would say I was welcome and we would hang up. After awhile she got used to these calls and would just say, "You heard one of 'those stories' again, huh?"

At The Box Project, I still hear heart-wrenching stories. Every day we get phone calls and letters from desperate people living in poverty, needing medications, heat, a decent place

to live, food, clothing, school supplies so their children can go to school...a friend.

Sometimes I wonder if we're doing enough of the right things. How do we know if the family in Mississippi and the family in California are going to be good for each other? How do we measure the difference we make?

A.A. Milne, the author of the famous Winnie The Pooh stories once said, "In the quiet hours when we are alone and there is nobody to tell us what fine fellows we are, we come sometimes upon a moment in which we wonder, not how much money we are earning, nor how famous we have become, but what good we are doing."

Do you ever wonder if you're doing enough to make the world a better place? If you sponsor a family, are you concerned that you cannot meet all their needs? Do you think about that family when you go through your normal day-to-day activities...the ones we often take for granted?

Our sponsors and contributors are among the most generous I have ever known. Sometimes we just have to measure with our hearts. We have to know in our hearts that we have done right by someone...even if only by being their friend, by offering hope.

Let's be thankful for our own good luck and be content in knowing we're helping to make life better...safer...more livable for someone in need.

You have made a difference. If you sit quietly and listen...you can feel it in your heart.

Most Sincerely,

Susan Patneaude

Executive Director



A SPONSOR'S STORY

By Thespine Kavoulakis

Michael Wade wasn't even born yet when June and Jay Schechter became his family's sponsor through The Box Project thirty years ago. June saw a mention of The Box Project in Good Housekeeping magazine, discussed the possibility of sponsoring a family with her husband, Jay, and then signed up. "I very distinctly remember wanting to make a difference in their lives, that one of them might get out of poverty," says June.

Jay had agreed that sponsoring a family would be a wonderful thing—as long as June did all the shopping. They agreed to spend about \$10 a month. They were assigned a family with a mother, a father, and five children in Mississippi just before Christmas, so June went out to do Christmas shopping and brought the gifts home to wrap. Wrapping and packing those Christmas gifts became a new holiday tradition for the Schechters, who are Jewish.

Five months later, Michael also joined the family. His mother Mary was 15, and now the family spanned three generations. Mary would have five children. She also took a job as a hotel maid, telling the Schechters that she didn't want to rely on assistance and needed to work to keep her self respect.

"When Michael was around ten years old, I remember writing to him and saying that if he stayed in school and got good grades, we would certainly help him further his education," says June. "We told him way back that we wanted to do this for him, for his sister, too, if she finished high school."

Mary and her family moved to Springfield, Illinois. Michael went on to finish his senior year with good grades, and June and Jay went to his graduation. He was the first one in the Wade family to graduate from high school, and the first one headed to college.

"They had talked to me quite a lot all through high school, that if I wanted to go to college they would help," says Michael, and true to their word, the Schechters were there to help with tuition, books, and expenses. He enrolled in a six week preparatory course to polish some math skills and prepare for college academics, but the program frustrated him. "In high school, I was pretty much trying to get out of there," he says. "I guess I just wasn't ready for the transition, and I left."

"We were disappointed, of course," says June.

"June told me that whenever I was ready, they would be ready to help me," adds Michael. For the next eight years, Michael worked at several jobs, including managing a Wendy's restaurant. "He just floundered for a few years," June recalls. "He didn't know what he wanted to do. He was depressed, frustrated. His self esteem was very low..." Michael became a father, with a daughter and later a son to support.

During this time, Jay died. When Christmas of 1994 came around, June found herself in a difficult position. This would be the first year that she would be wrapping and packing Michael's Christmas gifts all alone. "It was one of the hardest things I had to do," she said, "but I had to do it, so I did."

Then in 1999 things changed dramatically for Michael. His mother died, he found out he had kidney disease and needed dialysis three days a week, his son was born, he moved back to Illinois, and later he was put on a transplant list for a new kidney.

That's when he decided he was going to do something useful with his life and stop floundering. Michael figured that he was spending three days a week, four hours and fifteen minutes a day, on dialysis, and he could use that time to do something

productive. "I had so much time on my hands I might as well study and go back to college," he says. "That way, I could get a decent job where I could afford to support myself and my kids." June was still committed to helping Michael better his life via a college education, and said she would take care of it. Michael enrolled at Robert Morris College in Illinois to major in Graphic Arts.

June tells how Michael started in a two-year program, "but he did so well that he wrote to say that he wanted to stay for the four-year program. The difference his accomplishment has made in his self esteem has been tremendous." Michael has another explanation: "When I was in school, I was able to do a lot of homework while on dialysis."

This May, Michael graduated from college Cum Laude, with a 3.67 grade point average. The job market in Springfield isn't promising, so this summer he and his daughter will be on their way to Texas to be near a childhood friend and some relatives, and to look for a job that can work around his dialysis schedule. He'll remain on the transplant list in Illinois and return if a kidney becomes available.

"When you can get someone out of this cycle, you do what you can," says June. She is still sending her "boxes" to Michael and helping him along until he gets on his feet, "which I believe he will," she says

Michael says "it's been more than a sponsorship; I call her when I have problems and I get advice for myself and about my daughter. When my mother passed away, she took over the mothering role, too. I think of her as my family, as my godmother."

In school, Michael had an assignment to write a paper about heroes. He wrote about June. "She always talked about education, about furthering yourself through education," he says. June cites Michael's new found success at academics as a key to his increased self esteem and determination to succeed, but Michael says "it was less about me than it was about the environment I was in. It was not a good environment. As a teen, I had to deal with my friends and what they were doing. When I got sick, I thought I HAD to do something to better myself, better my situation. And I'm starting to see some daylight now."

Meanwhile, all he can do is wait—wait for the kidney transplant to come through, wait for a job that offers enough salary to make a living, and wait to be out of the cycle of dependence on other people.

"We DID make a difference for the family," says June, "certainly for Michael (our sponsorship) has made a world of difference to his whole life. He can go on from here and have a good life for himself whereas before, it wasn't even possible."

"One of the things that Jay and I felt very strongly about was our hope to break the cycle of poverty of our family through education. For Michael not only to have had the perseverance to attend college but to graduate 'cum laude' was a fantastic fulfillment of our goal. I am SO proud of him!"

"The whole thing has been VERY worthwhile," she concludes. "And it would have been worth doing this if only for what it has done for Michael and the legacy he can hand down to his children."

Michael has another word for June and Jay's sponsorship: "It was a blessing," he says. "I'll tell you that. It was certainly a blessing."

CURTAILING COCKROACHES AND OTHER CRAWLING CREATURES

Cockroaches and humans have coexisted for centuries. It's even said that if the human race was ever wiped out by a nuclear explosion, the cockroaches would survive to take over our homes and carry on in our memory because they are immune to nuclear fallout.

But that doesn't mean that they have to share our houses now! While there are several chemical roach treatments available in stores, some of the most effective treatments can be made cheaply and easily at home. Here are a few recipes that will help you get rid of cockroaches and some other critters:

1. Stir together ½ cup sugar with ½ cup baking soda. The roaches will gobble up the sugar, and the baking soda will give them an upset stomach and kill them. One cup of this mixture will treat an entire house. Just put a small spoonful in corners, under appliances, behind furniture, near garbage cans, and anywhere else roaches like to hide.

2. Sprinkle Diatomaceous Earth in places that you see roaches. This will also help with other insects. Diatomaceous Earth is the ground up fossilized shells of tiny organisms called diatoms. It is odorless and nontoxic. The microscopic, sharp edges destroy the roach's exoskeleton and kill it in a matter of hours. If the roach eats the Diatomaceous Earth, the same sharp edges will destroy its insides. You can find Diatomaceous Earth at hardware stores for just a few dollars a bag.

3. Hang a bunch of bay leaves in your kitchen cabinets. Roaches and many other insects cannot tolerate the smell of bay leaves.

4. Treat your house with Boric Acid, available in hardware stores and home supply centers. Sprinkle the boric acid wherever roaches walk, such as inside and under cabinets, under appliances, and along the bottoms of walls. The acid eats into the roach's body and kills it.

Boric Acid is harmless to humans, although you wouldn't want children or animals to get into it. After a couple of weeks, the boric acid wears out and you need to reapply it. Also, water weakens it, so you'll need to reapply it if it gets wet.

For a stronger, quicker treatment, get the boric acid directly into the roach. To do this, place a cracker on a small dish or plastic lid or piece of aluminum foil—anything to hold it. Drizzle enough water on the cracker to make it soggy, then sprinkle boric acid on top. Put the plate with the cracker inside a cabinet or anyplace else you have seen roaches. The

roaches will come to eat the cracker, ingesting the boric acid, and poisoning themselves. They will also get the boric acid on their feet and feelers and carry some back to the nest, where they will die. Other cockroaches in the nest will eat the dead roaches and also get the borax into their systems.

5. To prevent roaches and other bugs from entering your house, buy a bag of Cedarside granules. You can find them in the garden section of many stores. Sprinkle the granules around the outside of your house to form a barrier. Insects and roaches won't cross the barrier.

Cedarside granules are a natural product and won't hurt humans or animals. In fact, you can sprinkle some granules on your animals to repel fleas.

6. Lure the roaches to a delicious smelling dinner by mixing up a batch of Roach Balls. Mix together 1 cup of 20 Mule Team Borax laundry booster, ¼ cup sugar, ¼ cup chopped onion, 1 tablespoon cornstarch and 1 tablespoon water. Shape the mixture into about fifty little balls. Place two or three balls into sandwich size plastic bags and leave the tops of the bags open. Put the bags anywhere you see roaches. The onion smell will lure the roaches to the plastic bags. They'll eat the Roach Balls and carry them back to the nest, helping to kill other roaches.

Make sure to keep the plastic bags with the Roach Balls out of reach of children and pets.

7. If you live in an apartment building or your house is very close to your neighbors' houses and they have roaches, you will never get rid of them. The roaches may live next door, but they won't mind coming to YOUR house for dinner and visits.

The best thing to do in this case is to get together with the neighbors, pool your resources, and together try some of these remedies. You need to attack the roaches all at the same time so that they don't move from one home to another, each time avoiding one roach treatment or another. If everyone attacks them at the same time, you have a better chance of winning the battle.

8. And finally, the best method to keep roaches out of your house is to keep your house absolutely clean and free of crumbs or sitting food. Store all food in sealed jars and plastic containers. Clean up every mess thoroughly. Roaches won't stay and multiply if there isn't anything for them to eat.

PRESCRIPTION HELP FOR LOW INCOME FAMILIES

Many pharmaceutical companies offer programs for low-income people who cannot afford their medications. Eligibility criteria are different for each company. Usually, the only way to access those programs is through the doctor's office.

Families that need help affording medication should tell the doctor that they would like to apply for the Patient Assistance Program to get medications at low cost or no cost. The applications must be submitted by the doctor's office. Ask the doctor's office staff to fill out the paperwork and submit it. In the long run, the medicine helps keep patients healthier, which is the goal of both the patient and the doctor.

If you have Internet access, check online to see which companies have special programs that might apply. The Website www.HelpingPatients.org provides a handy tool for identifying free or low cost programs that may be available. Select your state, then answer a few questions about your medications, zip code, age, and a few other pieces of information and it will provide a list of programs in your area for the medications you listed. You can then access contact information for the programs, or print applications to apply for the free or discounted drug programs.

The Box Project has also posted a chart with pharmaceutical program information at: www.boxproject.org/medicine.pdf

APPALACHIA: THE VIEW FROM MY WINDOW

By Sandi Keaton-Wilson

Sandi Keaton-Wilson was raised and continues to live in Kentucky. For as long as she can remember, she has been promoting the Appalachian region by writing. Widely published in the region, she is also a storyteller and new playwright. She most enjoys reading her work in public venues, allowing both the dialogue and dialect she uses to charm her audiences. Sandi is also an active member of the Mountain Moms.

As most of us who live here know, Appalachia is more than a mountainous geographic location. Although it is a beautiful natural region, it is more a sense of place. "Appalachian" is an identity so closely related to the land, that removal of ourselves from it can result in near loss of self. Often those who move away for reasons of higher wages or marriages are not truly satisfied until they move back home to retire (if not before).

Appalachia is an area of contradictions. The inhabitants are stereotyped to be poor, uneducated, and lacking in the conveniences of the modern-day world.

While this may be true to some extent, is it not also true of a section of almost any city, state, or country? Here, we are rich in natural resources, rich in a more relaxed way of life, and rich in a connection with the heavens and the earth that defy any common explanation.

There is a definite cross here between the spiritual and superstition. Our people respect powers that they cannot see, but know exist from the time they are babies. Folklore is as rampant as the four gospels, and both are considered important in daily planning, for how can you live in a place so divinely close to what Eden must have been and not recognize the forces of both good and evil? Old sayings are as much a part of our dialogue as the molasses-sweet and slow dialect that is often heard. Self-education is a constant process and practice; you will find some of the most brilliant and creative people in the world in Appalachia.

We love and respect our own. Many have little concern for material things unless it makes life better for the folks we cherish most. Family and friends mean the world to us as there are occasions when that is all we've had. We make do with whatever we have, we know sacrifice and selflessness. The poorer the person, the more apt she/he is to give sustenance or aid, recognizing the feeling of need. Yet more than that, we tend to be a creative lot, making something beautiful from what we have at hand, whether it is by wood carving, pottery, quilts, music, or stories.

Decoration Day is a major holiday for us. Others call it Memorial Day, but often our day of celebration is on a Saturday or Sunday. This can mean having a dinner on the ground at the grave yard, making crepe papers flowers or corn shuck flowers, or decorating graves with real rose bushes. This is a time for family reunions with the living and the dead. Years after the deceased loved ones have passed, we write tribute poems to them to be published in local newspapers. Newly deceased individuals are shown respect by the custom of our pulling cars over to the side of the highway and stopping for the funeral procession to pass by. The homes of the mourning are filled with delicious foods of every sort and caring souls with a kind touch and listening ear.

Things are not always pretty. Men, feeling emasculated sometimes by the poor economy and lack of substantial jobs,

pound the poverty they see in the faces of their wives and children. To me, often the women are the stronger ones here. Being able to find some sort of employment or schooling, keeping home and children in order, and standing strong no matter what the weather, literally or physically, they are a force to be reckoned with! Mountain women's combined strength can move mountains or keep mountains from being moved in case of strip mining, etc.

Not to fault all men. Many labor in coal mines, mills and logwoods until they literally wear their bodies out. They are of dominable spirit and will work at something until they fall dead doing it. And hopefully, it will happen outdoors, even closer to the land they love and to the God they worship.

In all honesty our youth sometimes struggle. Television has brought the millennium to the hills and hollows. Seeing the wealth and the sparkle of bigger cities and bigger dreams can sometimes lead to dissatisfaction. Drugs have become a way some deal with issues of uncertainty about what to do with their futures. They are not as attuned to the simple, sometimes rustic means their ancestors relished.

For the last ten years I have been pleasantly surprised with the large number of foreigners that have relocated to Appalachia, foreigners being ANYONE NOT FROM HERE! Often I will be the only "native" in a group of friends and yet they all now identify with this area and call it home. We like their bringing new ideas and traditions with them, and we like even better their accepting ours!

Appalachian families enjoy anything useful that makes life easier in the day to day grind. They also have a fondness for anything beautiful, and importantly, they like to show love and acceptance to new people.

I cannot imagine living anywhere other than in Appalachia. I feel embraced and protected by the arms of God embodied in the trees and mountains. My soul thirsts only for this sweet water. My eyes see reality and my heart forgives, holds precious this—the view from my window.

Appalachian Values

Loyal Jones, Director of the Appalachian Center at Berea College, identified 10 values that are typical of Appalachian people.

They are:

1. Religion: Stressing the fundamentals of faith and dependence on local resources and leadership.
2. Individualism: Self-reliance and pride—not wishing to be beholden and often not willing to ask for help.
3. Neighborliness and Hospitality.
4. Family Centeredness and Supportiveness: loyalty above all else to family.
5. Personalism: Going to great lengths to agree, even when they do not.
6. Love of place.
7. Modesty: No putting on airs or boasting. By the same token, there is no accepting boastfulness from another. If they feel that they have to look up to someone, they'd rather look away.
8. Sense of beauty.
9. Sense of humor.
10. Patriotism.

The Box Project in Appalachian Kentucky

The Box Project Family Match program works with several organizations in rural Kentucky, known as Appalachian Kentucky. Three of the Kentucky referral agencies are the Mountain Moms in Monticello; Family Life Service Center in Mt. Vernon; and Jackson County Ministries in Annville.

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is a federal-state partnership working to create opportunities for economic development and for people to become self-sustaining in the region. Unfortunately, their data does not back up their forward-thinking plans. The per capita market income in 2001 shows \$13,470 for Appalachian Kentucky versus \$26,309 for the nation. The unemployment rate was 6.8%, well over the national average. Their statistics show that 24.4% of this population was living in poverty in the year 2000. The ARC is working on community collaborative efforts for economic development and such strategies as road building, both with highways and with technology, to enable people in rural areas to become part of the American mainstream.

Sister Ann Kernan of the Mountain Moms works with women in this Appalachian region. The Mountain Moms offers a place to come and meet, and provides support people that give women enough confidence to move on in their lives. The group has enjoyed a relationship with The Box Project that began about five or six years ago with 20 or 25 match families. She says that about 50% of those matches are still going strong.

Operating out of the basement of a "small country church," St. Peter's Church in Monticello, the Mountain Moms has an open door policy, with activities every day and several programs such as regular sessions on spousal abuse, nutrition, and personal care. Important on the agenda of the Mountain Moms is decent, affordable housing, and making sure that people have the necessities of life. Forty-two percent of the people in the Appalachia region live in rural areas, versus 20% of the population nationally. Because one of the basic issues in the area is a lack of transportation Sister Ann says that the group has two mini-vans, one with more than 180,000 miles on it, that regularly get people where they have to go.

Even though some people overcome area stereotypes, like the hillbilly image, by seeking higher education and employment, there are very few professional positions so often the gap between welfare and work is difficult to bridge. The economy of the area is moving from dependence on natural resources like coal mining and manufacturing to an emphasis on the service industry and tourism. Sister Ann cites one match family, where the Mom moved on to education and a job in a daycare center, only to lose her state funded health insurance. After two calamities involving hospital stays, the family, with jobs but without health insurance, is caught in a spiral of debt. Sister Ann describes it, "one little slip and they're poorer than they ever were."

Match Family Guidelines

The Box Project has developed recommended guidelines that clarify our expectations of the intended long-distance nature of our match relationships and issues of confidentiality and accountability. They emphasize the importance of letters and/or email and suggest that recommendations and precautions be taken by match families who choose to expand their relationships outside of the intended letters to include telephone calls or in-person visits. The following is our guideline:

The Box Project matches families with the intention that they will develop a long distance relationship and communicate through letters or sometimes e-mail. Our program is based on written communication, and you are not required to have phone calls or in-person visits just because your match family requests it.

The Box Project primarily uses referring agencies to enroll and maintain relationships with recipients in the program. Sponsors generally sign up for the program online or through the mail, but The Box Project does not screen either recipients or sponsors for criminal backgrounds or any other personal information.

The Box Project is not responsible for any relationship outside of letters, e-mail, and boxes. Such a relationship is at your own risk and responsibility, and The Box Project does not accept any liability if both you and your match family agree that you want to include telephone calls, face-to-face meetings, or visits to each other's homes.

You are under no obligation to have telephone visits or meet face-to-face with your match family. You are also not under any obligation to help your match family with family issues beyond what you can send in a box or through the mail. If you ever feel that the relationship with your match family is inappropriate or makes you uncomfortable or unsafe, please notify The Box Project immediately so we can address your concerns.

Leaving A Legacy

(Part 1 of a 2 part series)

By Rona S. Fingold, M.S.W., J.D., L.L.M. *Rona Fingold is a Manager with RSM McGladrey, Inc. Her practice focuses on estate planning, planned giving, and issues related to the elderly. As a friend of The Box Project, she has offered to answer any questions you may have. Please send your questions to Sue Patneau at The Box Project, or email info@boxproject.org.*

You have proven over and over your unwavering support for The Box Project. However, you may not be aware that there are techniques to make charitable gifts that can benefit not only the causes that you believe in, but your bottom-line as well.

Even as you help improve the lives of others, you can give in ways that maximize tax advantages and preserve your financial resources.

Cash Gifts—Cash gifts are always great. Not only can you make your annual gift to The Box Project, for which you may be entitled to an income tax charitable deduction, but you may also wish to consider making a gift to The Box Project in your will. In many situations, such a gift can provide you with a significant reduction in your estate taxes.

Gifts of Stock—Owning stock that has gone up in value presents a unique opportunity to make a gift to the The Box Project, as well as obtain a tax deduction for yourself.

When donating appreciated stock (that you have held for at least one year), you receive an income tax deduction based on the fair market value of the stock at the time of the gift. Moreover, you avoid capital gains taxes that would otherwise be owed on the sale of the stock. Your stockbroker can arrange for a year-end gift-transfer of stock from your account to ours.

Watch our next newsletter for Part 2 of this series.

Promote The Box Project

The Box Project has available a short film and some informational materials for anyone who would be interested in promoting our organization. Many groups and clubs host speakers at their meetings, so if you or anyone you know would be interested in speaking about The Box Project, please contact Sue Patneade, Executive Director, at (386) 677-8094 to make arrangements.

We know that members of The Box Project enjoy the one-to-one relationship and personal contact that our program embodies, and we believe that the same personal connection can be used to promote our mission.

When members speak to any organizations, such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions clubs, Junior League, church groups, PTAs, scouts, women's clubs, college clubs, etc., the audience has an opportunity to reach out and make contact, to ask questions and request more information in the same personal manner that The Box Project promotes.

It is this one-to-one relationship that we believe is the strength of our organization above all others, and we believe that we can reach out and recruit more sponsors and more donors to The Box Project if our members were to reach out to their communities in the same way. So please make use of the resources in the office to help The Box Project grow; the staff is always available to help you and to answer any questions.

BACK TO SCHOOL

Reminder: Mississippi students return to school in August, so school supplies, uniforms, and other necessities should be sent to them for August, not September.

Also, The Box Project is requesting donations for a "school supplies" fund to be used by families awaiting a match. This year we are asking for monetary contributions only. You can charge your donation to a credit card online at www.boxproject.org/donate.html (write "school supplies" in the comments section) or mail any donations to:

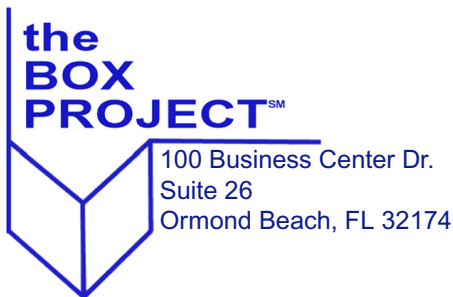
The Box Project
c/o School Supplies Fund
100 Business Center Drive
Suite 26
Ormond Beach, FL 32174

The Box Project Annual Report

The Box Project recently published our annual report for the 2004 year. The annual report, along with a copy of our audited financials, is available to view or print from our Website at: www.boxproject.org/about.html.

We recognize and embrace the need for accountability. We are proud of our fiscal record and welcome your scrutiny.

We want to ensure that the information is valuable to you. We welcome your ideas for improvement in future years.



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