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## Inside This Issue:

- Box Ideas
- Insert to send to Match Families
- Hard-to-Match Family Profiles
- Holiday Match Information
- Notes from the Office



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

Welcome to our Back to School edition!! I have had a lifelong love of office supplies that started when I first went to school. I remember opening up a fresh, new box of crayons and breathing in their waxy aroma, pulling out a bright piece of white paper and beginning a four year old's "masterpiece". I loved the way the factory sharpened crayon glided across the paper as I made lollipop trees, box houses, and potato-shaped people with stick arms and legs. In retrospect my excitement was not just over the new crayons but all the things a new box of crayons can represent: change, new opportunities, new friends and teachers, and most of all decorating my parent's refrigerator. My favorite box to put together for my family is my August box of school supplies. I choose items I really like and hope that my enthusiasm for education and creativity magically travels from Rhode Island to Mississippi.

I now have that same excitement when I open a brand new multi-pack of roller ball pens, even though they do not smell nearly as good and I am not nearly as idealistic. In retrospect though, I have done some mighty powerful things with my roller pens. I have completed my master's degree in special education, paid for a part of my wedding, paid the mortgage for my home, wrote the check for fertility treatment that resulted in my now three-year-old daughter, and most recently made a contribution to The Box Project's matching fund challenge.

I encourage you all to think about the power of your favorite pen and write a letter to your sponsor family, write a thank you note

to someone you have forgotten to appreciate, write to us about your experiences as a TBP sponsor, and if you are able make an additional contribution. Jonathan Kozol said "Pick battles big enough to matter, small enough to win." I believe that sponsoring a family living in rural poverty does matter and is small enough to win by making a difference, one family at a time.

Best Wishes,

*Rachel Santa*

President  
Board of Directors

## SPONSOR GATHERING

One of the benefits of being on the staff of The Box Project is the opportunity we have to meet amazing people every day. Usually we meet them by phone or on e-mail, but at the end of June we held a Sponsor Gathering in Daytona Beach and got to meet some inspiring new friends. We invited every sponsor in Florida. Maybe the timing was bad, or maybe a small group was just meant to be. Whatever the reason, we had a small but mighty event! If you're interested in hosting a Sponsor Gathering in your area, please contact Jamie to get started.



L to R: Kitty, Dale, Ramona, Margaret, Janet, Anne, Sue, & Jamie.



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Poverty and Hunger – “Too much month at the end of the money”.

You cannot open a magazine or a newspaper today without finding a new diet plan, an article about nutrition and health, experts discussing obesity and pointing their fingers at fast food outlets and people with bad habits. We read these articles from our comfortable arm chairs after having just eaten a nutritious, well balanced meal and we feel thankful, and even a little smug that WE are not THEM.

Not long ago we matched a sponsor with a perfectly suited recipient family. The sponsor asked for certain ages and sex of the children to be sure her own children would be able to relate and help buy and pack boxes. We thought we were so clever to make this perfect match and we sent off the materials to both families with a huge self satisfied sigh. Shortly afterward we got an indignant call from the sponsor. She said she did not want to sponsor this family. When we asked her why, she said, “Well, these kids are fat. I don’t want to sponsor fat kids.” There are days when we could just put our heads down on our desks and cry. This was one of those days. But in the end it points up the glaring lack of knowledge most of us have about what living in poverty is really like. We have a responsibility to help people understand that even though deep inside we’re really the same, when you live in poverty, you probably don’t eat the same or live the same way.

I recently visited the Second Harvest Food Bank in Central Florida. I toured their facility and saw their new video about poverty and hunger. One mom said, “I know I’m not feeding my children the most nutritious food. It’s cheaper to buy the junk than it is to buy good food.” I recently read that poor families are priced out of a healthy diet and a recent study found that there was a 51% price gap between shopping carts full of nutritious food and those filled with unhealthful foods. It seems to me that if people in poverty need to go to food banks because they cannot afford even a full month’s worth of cheap, unhealthy foods, they could never afford the healthy fruits and vegetables many of us enjoy. How, then, can we be surprised that people in poverty struggle with obesity?

Some things to think about:

- The problems of poverty, hunger, homelessness, and inadequate housing are not solved in isolation from each other. They are interconnected.
- Poor people have their utilities disconnected often because they can’t afford the high cost. When the refrigerator isn’t working fresh food goes bad.

- Right now, in the richest country in the world, 37 million Americans are living in a state of poverty, hunger and hardship.
- Since 2000, the number of poor Americans has grown by more than 6 million. 77% of people in poverty live in a rural area.
- 15.6 million Americans live in severe poverty - with incomes below half of the poverty line.
- The child poverty rate in the U.S. is two-to-three times higher than any other major industrialized nation.
- One out of every 6 children in America lives in poverty.
- Living in poverty robs children of their sense of security and adversely affects their ability to learn.
- According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of poor people in America increased by 1.1 million last year and has increased every year for the past four years.
- The federal government puts the poverty threshold at \$20,650. However, a 2000 poll revealed that a majority of Americans believe it takes at least \$35,000 annually to provide adequately for a family of four.

This issue cannot be solved overnight and by only one means. The comment I mentioned was reflective of a society that does not understand poverty...even in the midst of poverty. The sponsor was innocently reacting only to what she believed to be true...that people in poverty have the same choices as the rest of us. I don’t think so. Do you?

Sincerely,

*Susan Patneau*

Executive Director

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**BOX IDEAS.** . . bubbles, books, journals, pens, pencils, crayons, disposable cameras, workbooks, bug box, coloring books, outdoor games, lawn games, buckets/shovels, summer pajamas, watercolor paint set/paint brushes and paper, board games, all-purpose wipes, craft kits, flower seeds, lemonade/kool aid mixes, playdough, art stamps/stamp pads, construction paper, card games, bathing suits, beach towels, jello, sunglasses, sunscreen, healthy snacks, magazines, toothbrushes/toothpaste, summer sheet sets, recipes, popsicle makers, note cards sets, paper, backpacks, boxes of tissues, paper towels, colored pencils, markers, 3-ring notebooks, hand sanitizer, pencil boxes or pouches, socks, shoes, uniforms.

**Do You Need Help  
Paying for Child Care?**

There may be several sources of child care assistance funds available to you, including government assistance, private scholarships, and tax credits.

**Kentucky**  
1-800-421-1903

**Maine**  
1-207-287-5014

**Mississippi**  
1-800-877-7882

**South Dakota**  
1-800-227-3020

**West Virginia**  
1-304-558-2993

There are other ways to help pay for child care. Some programs such as the YMCA, religious groups, or community agencies offer assistance programs to help you pay for tuition. Please contact the number in your state for more information.

**Do You Need Help  
Paying for Medication?**

If you or someone in your family is in need of help with medication, there are programs available to help. To get more information please contact your local doctor or these programs:

**The Partnership for Prescription Assistance** (1-888-477-2669) has information on many different programs available to low income individuals and families. They will be able to tell you what programs are offered in your state and how to contact those agencies.

**Rx Outreach** (1-800-769-3880) is an affordable way for people of all ages to get medicines they need. Through this program, qualified people can get more than 125 common medications that treat a many conditions including depression, heart disease, asthma and diabetes.

Even if you receive medicines through another program you may still qualify for this one.

**Do You Need Help Paying for College?**

Please contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-433-3243. They can answer your questions and help you get an application.

**Kentucky**  
1-800-928-8926

**Maine**  
1-800-782-5772

**Mississippi**  
1-800-327-2980

**South Dakota**  
1-605-867-5338

**West Virginia**  
1-888-825-5707

**Do You Need Help  
Paying for Utilities?**

**LIHEAP** is a program whose goal is to help eligible low income households meet their home heating and cooling needs.

The summer cooling program provides eligible households with a **one-time payment** to the electricity provider. Air conditioners may be provided for households where someone is at risk for health problems associated with excess heat. To be eligible for an air conditioner, you must not have access to an air conditioner and meet one of these requirements:

- Have a member with a health condition or disability that requires cooling to prevent further deterioration as verified by a physician's statement;
- Have a member who is 65 years or older; **or**
- Have a member who is younger than 6 years old

For more information about the LIHEAP program please contact an agency in your state.

**National LIHEAP Information**  
1-800-233-8503

**Kentucky**  
1-800-456-3452

**Maine**  
1-207-624-5708

**Mississippi**  
1-800-421-07823

**South Dakota**  
1-605-773-4131

**West Virginia**  
1-800-642-8589

## ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO WRITE

An easy way to get your children writing is to have them sit down with a pencil and paper and write everything they can remember about their day (what they did, who they saw, the weather, what they wore, what games they played, a dream or a goal that they have). Children can write several days worth of information on one piece of paper. Try to make time to sit down and ask them to read what they wrote with or to you. This will give you some time together, and it will also help you know what your child is thinking about. Encourage children to write as much as they can and not to worry about the spelling.

## DON'T FORGET: AS A MEMBER OF THE BOX PROJECT YOU AGREE TO

1. Write a letter each time you receive a box or letter from your sponsor. If you don't send a thank you, you may not receive another box.
2. Tell your sponsor about your family. Talk about your life, your family, your children's activities, the city you live in, your childhood, anything that will help your sponsor get to know you better.
3. Ask only for basic needs (toothbrushes, tooth paste, toilet paper, school supplies, cleaning supplies, food, sheets, towels, etc.).
4. **NOT TO ASK FOR MONEY, PAYMENTS OF UTILITY BILLS, EXPENSIVE TOYS, NAME BRAND CLOTHING, VIDEO GAME SYSTEMS or COMPUTERS.**
5. **NOT TO ASK YOUR SPONSOR HOW MUCH THEY CAN AFFORD.**
6. **NOT TO ASK FOR ITEMS FOR PEOPLE WHO DO NOT LIVE WITH YOU.**

**EDUCATION FUND** Our Education Fund is available to eligible recipient family members of The Box Project for secondary, college or vocational education costs. Awards from this fund are intended to help cover costs which may not be covered by other grants or scholarships. To apply, please visit our website at [www.boxproject.org](http://www.boxproject.org) or you may call our office at 1-800-268-9928 and request an application.

## EASY MACARONI SALAD

1 cup elbow macaroni  
1/4 cup vegetables (as many as you like)  
1/2 cup salad dressing - your choice

1. Cook macaroni according to package directions.
2. Cut vegetables into bite size pieces.
3. Mix macaroni and vegetables in serving bowl
4. Add salad dressing and mix well.
5. Chill for 1 hour and serve.

## BACK-TO-SCHOOL SLEEP SCHEDULES

As summer comes to an end, it is time to start getting everyone back into their morning and bedtime routines. The best time to do this is to start several weeks to a month before the start of school. You should set a limit for the latest bedtime and wake up time and then move these times earlier (about 15 minutes every other day) as the school year gets closer. Children should be back to their normal wake up and bedtimes one full week before school starts. It is recommended that children receive the following amounts of sleep each night (including weekends):

18 months to 3 years:	12-14 hours
3 to 5 years:	11-13 hours
5 to 12 years:	9-11 hours
Teens:	9 hours

## CHANGE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

If your address, telephone number, members of your family or any other personal information changes, please call The Box Project at 1-800-268-9928 so that we may update your record. Also, **remember to send information changes to your sponsor.** If your sponsor does not have the correct address, they will not be able to send you boxes or letters.

## EACH ONE ASK ONE – HELP US FIND GOOD SPONSORS

The files of good families sit on our shelves for months or years waiting to be matched with full-time sponsors because of the ages of the children, size of family, and specific family members. If you or anyone you know might be interested in being matched with a hard-to-match family, please contact our office. The following is a small sample of families we are trying to match.

- Family “A” lives in Maine and consists of parents under the age of 21 and two children under 5. They are struggling in very low paying jobs and live with his parents as they try to save enough to move and become self-sufficient.
- Family “B” is a multi-generational family in South Dakota consisting of grandparents, their daughter who is in college and three teenage grandchildren. They live on the Pine Ridge Reservation 80 miles from the nearest city.
- Family “C” consists of a 33 year old single mom raising 5 children and her sister who are all between the ages of 10 and 17. They live in Mississippi and have no vehicle.

## THE 2007 HOLIDAY MATCH SEASON IS APPROACHING

### Holiday Sponsor (limited-time relationships)

The Holiday Sponsor opportunity is a sponsorship option that does not require a long-term commitment. Each holiday season, families living in poverty face a painful dilemma knowing they can't even come close to a child's holiday expectations when they can barely keep a roof over their heads. Whether it's Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa or another winter holiday, each family has traditions and dreams in this season.

Holiday Sponsors can be individuals, families, or groups that want to make the holidays brighter for another family.

### You will be able to select from the following options:

- *If you have a family you regularly sponsor for the holidays let us know and we will be sure you're matched with them as long as they're still enrolled in the program.*
- *You can be matched with one of our selected Centers, sending boxes of needed supplies for them to distribute to people in their community as local needs arise.*
- *You can send a check to The Box Project Holiday Fund and we'll make sure that people on our waiting list or recipients with special needs get the help they need (in 2006 the Holiday Fund was shared with our selected Centers).*

The Box Project makes the matches in early November so that there is plenty of time to plan the "magic" and send boxes well ahead of the holidays. Holiday Sponsor applications are accepted from September 1 through October 31 each year. The membership and matching fee is \$50 a year. Current Family Sponsors wanting a Holiday Match will pay a \$35 fee for each Holiday Match to help pay the cost of materials, and time.

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## Notes from the Office...

- **CORRECTION . . .** In our Winter 2007 issue, we inadvertently left out two of our volunteer Chatterbox moderators, Marilyn and Pamela . Our sincere apologies for the error. We appreciate the work they do.
- We will be sending out the 2007 Family Information Update Forms to recipient families soon. Please encourage your family to return the form as soon as possible. We'll send all sponsors, whose dues are current, a copy.
- **SHIPPING OPTIONS.** If you are looking for additional ways to mail packages to your recipient families, here are the names, web site addresses, and 1-800 numbers for the four major delivery services. USPS ([www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com)) 1-800-ASK-USPS; FED EX ([www.fedex.com](http://www.fedex.com)) 1-800-GO-FEDEX; UPS ([www.ups.com](http://www.ups.com)) 1-800-PICK-UPS; DHL ([www.dhl.com](http://www.dhl.com)) 1-800-CALL-DHL.
- **EMAIL NEWSLETTER OPTION.** It is our goal to send the majority of our newsletters through email by the Spring 2008 issue. As of today we have 207 members who have chosen this option. We will still send a paper copy to those who do not have access to a computer. Please make sure when you are renewing your annual dues to give us a current email address.
- **CELEBRITY SEARCH.** The Box Project is seeking generous celebrities who will agree to champion our cause and help us get the publicity we need to recruit more sponsors and donors. If you've recently seen the public service spots about St. Jude's Hospital with host Marlo Thomas you know what kind of clout it takes to achieve visibility and celebrity promotion. If you know of anyone who can help us secure the in-kind support of a celebrity with integrity and a passion for helping people in poverty right here in the US, please speak to them on our behalf or arrange for us to do so. Even an official endorsement or quote will allow us to get some valuable PR.
- **SCHOOL UNIFORM WEBSITE.** [www.thechildrenswearoutlet.com](http://www.thechildrenswearoutlet.com) has a designated section for school uniforms. Everything ranges in price from \$4 - \$9. They have pants, shorts, jumpers, skirts, skorts long and short-sleeved shirts in sizes 4-20 1/2. Because this is an outlet not all sizes are available.
- Please contact our office and let us know if your contact information (including your email address) changes.