



## News Release

### For Immediate Release:

#### Local Families Send Boxes Of Hope

### **Generous Austin, TX residents change lives by sponsoring and helping American families in rural poverty.**

Austin, TX —April 19, 2004— With the help of The Box Project, a national, non-profit organization, people in our community are making a difference in the lives of families living in rural poverty in America.

The Peterson family of Austin, Texas is just one of your neighbors helping those in need. Craig, Jill, Nicole, and Hunter Peterson have been sponsoring a family of 2 in Mississippi for over 4 years. Their match family includes a mother and daughter. "I liked the idea that we would get to know our match family through letters, packages and pictures" says Jill. "It is rewarding for my children to make or select items at the store to include in a monthly box and know that they are making a difference." The most rewarding part of being a sponsor family is the personal touch it allows us to have with someone. It takes more thought and time than simply writing a check. With The Box Project, we are able to address specific needs and wants, and then hear from them how much it is appreciated. It is particularly humbling and satisfying to hear that our box arrived just in time to take care of a special need.

The Box Project acts as a matchmaker, pairing sponsors with carefully screened individuals or families that need help. The goal of the program is to help them become self-sufficient and overcome the cycle of poverty. The sponsors offer long-term friendships, including encouragement, advice, and boxes of needed supplies about once a month. Sponsors and recipients communicate directly with each other through letters, or phone calls. They send boxes of food, clothing, or supplies directly to the families. As they come to know each other more, trust and friendships grow—providing a positive and valuable experience for both the recipient and the sponsor.

This Family Match program is unique in offering direct communication between the matched families and eliminating the middleman. Sponsors control how much time they spend and what finances or resources they want to contribute to their matched family. Often they will get their own families, friends and social groups to assist them with their sponsorship, all the while offering the opportunity to teach their children the value of helping and learning about other people and cultures

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**Our Mission:** Encouraging families and individuals living in rural poverty in America to become self-sufficient and overcome the cycle of poverty by offering them friendship, education, and material aid.



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The Box Project relationships are also rewarding for the participating sponsor families. Lynn Bayer, a sponsor through The Box Project, said about the impact on her children, “They’re always getting excited, saying things like ‘I bet the kids in Mississippi would like this book.’ It’s an added dimension to their lives that they really enjoy.”

“You are not just being asked to give to a cause”, said Cindy Shearer, President of The Box Project. “You are helping John, Kathy and Camille—names of real people in a family you’ve come to actually know and who give you friendship too.”

The Box Project sponsors are matched with families in rural areas of Maine, West Virginia, Virginia, Mississippi, and Kentucky, as well as Native Americans on reservations of South Dakota. Currently over 450 families have been screened and are on a waiting list for a sponsor and friend. The Box Project also offers limited time sponsorship matches during the holidays, and welcomes donations to support and expand our education programs and other services. For more information about how to get involved, go to [www.boxproject.org](http://www.boxproject.org) or call 800-268-9928.

#### About The Box Project

The Box Project, Inc. is a national, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Founded in 1962, The Box Project has been working to help people living in areas of the United States with the highest rates of rural poverty. We seek to ease the effects of poverty and increase mutual understanding through friendship, education, and material aid. With the help of our referring agencies, we seek out families who want to better themselves, work, and learn, then provide programs to support their growth and success.

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