



## News Release

### For Immediate Release:

#### Local Families Send Boxes Of Hope

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

Plainville, CT—February 18, 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 Deutsch family is just one of your neighbors helping those in need. As many of you may already know, Penny is a freelance writer and Jim is a private pilot. Although both are very active in Charlotte County community activities - Penny with several non-profit organizations and the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce and Jim with the Big Brothers organization, Airport Tenants' Association, and other flight related groups, they have been sponsoring a family of four in Mississippi for over three years. Penny and Jim say they became involved when the program was promoted on the Oprah Winfrey show. "We stay involved", Penny says, "because we have established a warm relationship with our family in Clarksdale. We are seeing the children grow up and provide educational tools as well as other items, and we look forward to meeting them in the near future." Jim adds, "We write back and forth, talk on the telephone and share photographs and special events. We've developed a close bond with our family and think more people would participate if they knew about the program."

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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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—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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