



News Release

THE BOX PROJECT LETS CHICAGOANS TAKE THE HOLIDAYS BACK FROM THE RETAILERS

For Immediate Release

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CHICAGO – Oct. 22, 2004 – With Halloween around the corner, some parents are bracing for the really scary time of year ahead -- the holidays. While a retailer's dream, the next month can become a mother's nightmare as children are besieged with advertisements for this season's "must-haves."

Parents wishing to impart the true meaning of the season can join with families across the country in an innovative family-centered approach to giving called The Box Project. Their Holiday Match Program could be the perfect way to take back the holidays by instilling in children an awareness of the needs of other Americans and the value of giving to others.

Each holiday season, families living in poverty face a terrible dilemma: trying to even come close to a child's holiday expectations when they can barely keep a roof over their heads. Currently The Box Project has over 450 families living in rural poverty that have been screened and are on a waiting list for a sponsor and friend.

Holiday Sponsors can be individuals, families or groups that want to make the holidays brighter for a family. The benefits are to the givers and the recipients. As soon as sponsors receive their family's address and family information, children can get involved in looking up the location on a map. They can send personalized greetings to family members and help select and wrap gifts.

Holiday sponsors are matched with one family and the commitment is only for one holiday season. Families are asked to forward a box of gifts with one new gift for each family member. There is no required amount of money set for the gift, so families can work within their budgets.

There is a registration fee of \$50 to become a Holiday Sponsor. The deadline for 2004 Holiday Match applications is Oct. 31 and all registration can be done online at www.boxproject.org.

Nearly half of the families that are holiday sponsors become ongoing sponsors with The Box Project. In addition to being able to help others, many credit the program with a newfound awareness of the challenges faced by those living in rural poverty. There are almost 100 families across Chicago working with The Box Project as sponsors. Media representatives can contact Jennifer Hudson to identify a sponsor family in their community.

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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, Inc. is a national, not-for-profit 501(c) 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.

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.

“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.”

For more information about how to get involved, go to www.boxproject.org or call toll free at 866-677-8094.

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