

Our Ref: KJ/JS

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Dear Friend

I have taken the liberty of contacting you personally, to ask you to consider supporting our annual Christmas Toy Appeal for disadvantaged children.

The Appeal now in its 32nd year aims to provide for each child a Christmas sack to open on Christmas morning.

The children are referred by a unique combination of all the areas caring and support agencies which ensures that we really do reach and help those most in need.

All the children come from extremely deprived homes, many have experienced family breakdown, violence and abuse. At the moment, NONE of them are looking forward to Christmas – but we hope to change this.

For many the realisation that Christmas is just a few weeks away is the trigger to write out present wish lists and begin those frantic shopping trips. But for so many parents it is a trigger to begin the annual excuses to their children as to why Father Christmas won't be calling this year.

The unemployment consequences of the recession have ensured that the need this year is greater than ever. Whatever the reason why a family is in need, their children are all experiencing the draining effects of living in poverty day after day – those on benefits receive no bonuses at Christmas they are expected to stretch even thinner, inadequate amounts of support to give their children the treats that so many of us take for granted.

Please help make a difference this year. Give a gift and give a child a Christmas to remember and the opportunity for at least one day to feel special like everyone else on Christmas Day.

"I was on the edge, losing my grip. I had their bags packed. I was going to leave them at Social Services (her four children). But then a bag arrived, full of toys and I got my grip back and my family stayed together" - that is an extract, from a thank you letter from a grateful parent benefiting from a previous appeal.

Please help make that difference this year.

Kevin Jenkins
Co-Founder / Senior Advisor
Overall Beacon Fellowship Award Winner 2008

Community Links Christmas Appeal

Community Links is based in Newham, East London, one of the poorest and most deprived urban areas in the UK, where 55% of children live in poverty. Throughout the year Community Links organises clubs, activities and services for over 3,700 disadvantaged children each week.

Our **Christmas Toy Collection** aims to provide for each child referred, a bag of gifts to open on Christmas morning. Children are referred by a unique combination of East London's caring agencies and family support groups including Social, Health, Education and Probation Services, Women's Aid, Gingerbread and the Association Against Domestic violence, ensuring that the Community Links Christmas Appeal helps those most in need at Christmas. The Christmas Appeal helps children aged between three months and fifteen years old. Already we know of many especially needy children who will be receiving nothing this year, for them our Appeal is their only hope of a happy Christmas. At the moment none of these children are looking forward to Christmas. **Please help us to change this.**

The difference that your help will make to so many is perhaps best summed up by the words of one young mother who on receiving a bag of gifts last Christmas said:

“I can feel like a real mum now and on Christmas day my children will feel like real children. thank you so much”

Cash or cheque donation

If you would like to make a cash or cheque donation (payable to Community Links) – We will convert your generosity into toys, games and books

If you would like to purchase a gift

Gift Guide

The Appeal aims to provide a bag of gifts for each child to open on Christmas morning, which are appropriate for their age and needs, ensuring your donation really does make a difference.

- Children who receive the gifts range in age from 3 months to 14 years
- Try to buy gifts that have both play and educational value to the child
- Please do not buy war toys or toys that promote violence
- Buy gifts that have the Lion Mark CE to show they are child friendly and safe for use by children within the specific age groups given
- Gifts might include...
 - First Toys – For the new born to 3 yrs i.e. rattles, rollers, etc
 - Early Years Toys (3-5 year olds) i.e. shape sorters, push/pull toys, blocks, etc
 - Annuals
 - Musical Instruments
 - Story Books (all ages)
 - Pen and Drawing Set
 - Dolls and Accessories
 - Paint by Numbers
 - Craft Kits
 - Box Games (all ages)
 - Construction Sets
 - LEGO
 - Cars
 - Fuzzy Felts
 - Disney Toys
 - Jigsaws (all ages)
 - Soft Toys
 - Model Kits (all ages)
 - Footballs



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT