



Dear Potential Sponsor:

My name is Bunchy Gertner and I sit on the Board of Directors of Voices For Children Foundation. We were voted **Best Charity of the Year 2009** for Miami-Dade County! Voices' raises funds to support the Guardian Ad Litem Program in their efforts to train court appointed volunteers who advocate for abused, abandoned and neglected children in dependency court. Voices' provides financial assistance and other resources to meet the children's educational, medical and social needs. We also believe they need "food for the soul."

I've been "chairing" the Voices' annual holiday toy drive for the last 12 years. The toy drive is a project born of need and compassion. There are almost 4,000 children in the foster care system; embedded in that number is a unique group of 600 teenagers who are "aging out" of the system. It is to this group of fragile young people that we direct our attention at this time of year for a special project. When this population reaches 18 years, they exit the dependency system to live *independently* for the first time in their lives.

Most of the transitioning youth population has spent years in foster care. Their lives have been difficult at best. They've been taken away from their biological parents at an early age, separated from their natural siblings, struggled with school and had little training in social skills or how to maneuver in the outside world. They've lived a life of second-hand choices and hand-me-down clothes.

This holiday season we are trying to level the playing field by gifting these young adults with a brand new present, wrapped and labeled with their name on the package. We wanted to give them something useful and also make them feel good about starting a new life in their rented apartment or house. They will be starting out with little more than the clothes on their backs. **We have chosen to gift them with new towels, queen size sheets, a blanket and pillow, dishes, glasses and flatware or a combination thereof; we've budgeted \$125.00 for each youth.** And there are 600 young adults waiting for a present.

As you can imagine, Voices' has taken on a very ambitious project, especially in an economy that has been battered by multiple forces. We are sensitive to the fact that the economic downturn has made for difficult times. But in extraordinary times, ordinary people do extraordinary things. We are asking you to help us keep our promise that every child in foster care will have a gift this holiday season, thus ensuring the "aging out" young people are not left behind.

Should you decide to embrace this special project, we would be very grateful. If you are sending a check, (in any amount you are comfortable with) please stipulate on the memo line that your gift is dedicated to the Toy Drive TY Project. If the donation is made through a charge card, please do the same with a note next to your information. If you want to buy a **new** item from the short list above, please deliver it **unwrapped** to The Village of Merrick Park in Coral Gables, third level, three stores from Nordstrom by December 11th..

Let's begin to change the world for this population of young people and give some meaning to their new life of independent living.

Sincerely,
Bunchy Gertner, Chair Holiday Toy Drive
Voices For Children Foundation, Board of Directors