



“Connecting families with more... to families with profoundly less.”

About Us

Established in 2003 by Pam Koner, our Founder and Executive Director, Family-to-Family is a nonprofit national hunger and poverty-relief organization dedicated to providing food and other basic life necessities to American families struggling with the challenges of poverty.

Our Mission

Our mission is to ease the burden of hunger and poverty by facilitating one-to-one connections between families with ‘enough to share’ and impoverished American families with profoundly less. Connecting donors with specific families in need through a constellation of family-friendly, hands-on giving programs, Family-to-Family provides individuals, employees, families and children from all economic walks of life with concrete ways to “share their bounty” that actively encourage empathy and compassion. Giving opportunities include sponsoring a family with monthly groceries, providing a book-hungry child with a book each month, making birthday boxes and more.

By connecting each donor family with a specific recipient family for both our Sponsor A Family hunger relief program and our One Book At A Time literacy program, we bring large and seemingly intractable problems into personal focus, making proactive, attainable results possible *one family and one child at a time*.

The families we help are mainly those living beneath the poverty line in communities with high levels of unemployment, significant percentages of residents without high school degrees, and low per capita incomes.

Our History

Our hunger-relief efforts were born out of a *New York Times* cover story that ran on September 29, 2002. The article profiled the town of Pembroke, Illinois, a community so profoundly poor that some houses had dirt floors, and tires were tied on top of damaged roofs to keep the roofs from blowing away. Pam Koner, a Westchester County, New York mom and entrepreneur, read the story and felt compelled to help. She phoned an outreach worker in Pembroke with the idea of linking families in her own community of Hastings-on-Hudson, New York with those in Pembroke, and was given the names of 17 of the neediest families. 16 neighbors joined Pam and they each began shopping for and sending a monthly box of food and basic necessities to one of the Pembroke families. Our core program, Sponsor A Family, was born.

Sponsor A Family – How it Works

While some donor families still shop for and ship a monthly box of food to “their” family, most donors today “cyber-sponsor” their family through a monthly donation of \$35 to

Family-to-Family. These donations allow us to purchase discounted groceries locally for each recipient family through our established relationships with Feeding America food banks, Walmart, K-Mart, Shoprite, Albertsons and other grocery stores.

A key aspect of the program is letter writing between donor and sponsored families. This helps to create a personal connection between them that provides both hope and inspiration. Donors are also encouraged to mail a non-food basic essential, like warm gloves, toothpaste or new socks, along with a gently used children's book, to their sponsored family every month. Families are matched whenever possible by the ages of children so hand me downs can work.

Sponsoring a family is also a meaningful way to teach children empathy and caring, because sending life's necessities is such a hands-on way to give. Kids can help pack a box, draw a picture, or write a letter to "their" family.

Family-to-Family recipient families are eligible for food stamps, but this supplement often is spent by the last week of the month and families are forced to go hungry. Exacerbating the problem, the shelves of small, local food pantries are frequently empty by the end of the month. For this reason, our monthly groceries are timed to arrive during the third week of every month, when our sponsored families are in most need of them.

One Book At A Time – How it Works

Through One Book At A Time, our core literacy program, individual donor families are linked one-to-one with "book hungry" children living in poverty. Each month for 12 months the donor chooses and sends one book and writes a letter to the child they are matched with through a participating outreach organization, which include schools, Boys & Girls Clubs and afterschool programs. The children write back each month. The program has a multitude of goals: to encourage reading, to foster letter writing skills, to help build home libraries (providing opportunities for other family members to read), and to provide empathy building experiences for donor families.

Where We Help – Our Footprint is National

During the first few years of operation, Family-to-Family focused its efforts on rural communities where a large percentage of families with children lived below the poverty level, and where there wasn't reliable access to social service assistance. These communities were underserved by schools, private social service organizations and government aid, and often lacked connections with informal helping networks like women's and church groups. Some lacked even the most basic infrastructure such as a supermarket, pharmacy, or bank.

In 2007 Family-to-Family expanded its model to include impoverished urban communities where many working poor were increasingly unable to meet their basic nutritional needs, and where, at the same time, food pantries were turning families away as the economy worsened and a greater demand for food was put on them.

Currently, Family-to-Family's **Sponsor A Family** hunger relief program serves impoverished families in **27 communities in 18 states**: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Texas and West Virginia.

Our **One Book At A Time** program serves children living in poverty in **22 communities in 14 states**: California, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New York, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, and Washington.

What We've Accomplished

Since our inception in 2003, we've provided the moms, dads, kids and grandparents we serve with groceries for **over 3.7 million meals**. Our combined hunger relief programs (see list of programs below) have reached families in 23 states.

Our One Book At A Time program has provided more than 6,300 books to children around the country, and in total our literacy programs (see below) have provided more than 26,000 new and gently used books to families unable to afford them.

Our Supplemental Programs

1. Hunger-relief

- **The DoorKnob Dinner Project** – a community-building project that enables communities across the U.S. to feed their neighbors in need. DoorKnob Dinner donors shop for and donate all grocery ingredients needed to prepare one dinner for a family of five once a month. The third Saturday of each month donors hang the groceries in a bag on their front doorknob, where they're collected by a neighborhood coordinator.
- **"Let's Do Dinner!"** – a version of DoorKnob Dinners for the workplace, social clubs and places of worship. Once a month employees, members or congregants bring in a bag of groceries to make one specific dinner for a family of five, based on a grocery list posted by Family-to-Family.
- **The Pantry Partner Network** – a way for families to "adopt" their local food pantry by shopping for and delivering food to the pantry every month.
- **Kids Can!** – a school-centered giving project for elementary school children. Students and teachers organize so that every month a different grade brings foods to stock a local food pantry, ensuring that a regular supply of donations flow into the pantry for 10 months of the year.
- **One Can At A Time** – Another in-school food drive to stock the local pantry, with a twist. Designed to enable a population of students with "less" to be givers too, students each bring in just one can a month.
- **The Breakfast Club** - Middle school students organize a schedule so that each month one grade collects boxes and arranges for delivery of breakfast foods to a local food pantry. Students also write and design flyers for distribution to help get the message out to the community.

2. Providing Personal Care Items

- **Share Your Beauty** - With the goal of putting a bit of sparkle and dignity back into the lives of women and teens in crisis, the Share Your Beauty program taps into the huge surplus of beauty products generated by the beauty industry, by

collecting unused products and delivering them to organizations serving women in crisis. 83,000 donated products to date have come from Aveeno, bareMinerals, Birchbox, Buxom, Elizabeth Arden, Essence/Cosnova Inc., Henri Bendel, Herbal Essence Shampoo through Pop Sugar, Knock Out Cosmetics, L'Occitane, L'Oreal, Lush, Mario Badescu, Pureology, Redken, Tarte Cosmetics.

- **“Shower To The People” Sponsorship Program**
Another one-to-one way donors can sponsor a specific family in need is with a \$15 monthly donation that provides a family with essential personal care items each month – including soap, shampoo, toothpaste and deodorant - basic necessities that can't be purchased with government food stamps.
- **The Stuffed Shirt Project**
A hands-on project in which donors pack personal care items such as soap, shampoo, deodorant and toothpaste into toiletry bags or new t-shirts (tied in a knot) to be given out to residents at a local homeless or outreach center.

3. *Increasing literacy*

- **The GivingWorks! Empathy Project** – a project that gives children with “less” the opportunity to be givers too, using books as the centerpiece.
- **Class to Class** – A book giving project that links a classroom of children with enough to give, with a classroom of children from an impoverished community, forming a book pal relationship.
- **Books for Life** – a book drive to send new and gently used books to our receiving communities, where books and libraries are scarce.
- **The Traveling Journal** – a way for classrooms of children with “less” and classrooms of children with “more” to communicate with and learn about each other, by writing and drawing in a shared journal that travels back and forth between schools.

4. *Helping families help themselves*

- **Victory Garden Project** – a way to provide communities with an impoverished population with everything needed to grow vegetables and to farm chickens in the form of a community garden.
- **Seeds for Change** – A seed drive to keep families in our receiving communities supplied with vegetable seeds. Donors purchase seeds online or in stores and send them to Family-to-Family; we then distribute them to our community outreach partners for distribution.

5. *Hands-on giving*

- **The Birthday Giving Project and Birthday Giving Parties** – two hands-on programs that encourage empathy and generosity by offering kids with “more” a way to send birthday gifts and party goods in individually decorated shoeboxes to needy children whose parents can't afford birthday celebrations.

6. *Seasonal drives to help sponsored families live like everyone else.*

- July Backpack and School Supplies Drive
- Thanksgiving Turkey Drive
- Give It Up! Holiday Toy Drive by kids for kids
- February Pajama Drive

7. *Natural disaster relief efforts*

In addition to Family-to-Family's basic mission to link families with more to families with less in an effort to ease hunger in America, we also sponsor emergency relief efforts, particularly after catastrophic events that affect families with children.

- **MOORE, OKLAHOMA TORNADO – 2013**
By linking with principals from several elementary schools in Moore, we organized a book drive to provide the children of Moore who were victims of the tornado with new books, a source of both comfort and escape. About 2,500 books were donated.
- **HURRICANE SANDY - 2012**
 1. We provided more than 860 “Welcome Home” boxes filled with nonperishable foods that helped restock kitchen cabinets of Sandy affected families also struggling with poverty.
 2. We linked over 700 sponsoring families one-to-one with specific hurricane affected families in the New York-New Jersey area, with donors providing “their” families with items that were needed most.
 3. We provided air beds, heaters, pillows, bedding, warm clothing, small kitchen appliances, cell phones and more to affected families.
 4. We provided 3,500 Sandy victims with a full Thanksgiving dinner.
 5. We coordinated a toy drive that yielded over 2,000 holiday toys for hurricane affected children at four schools.
- **JOPLIN, MISSOURI TORNADO – 2011**
This relief program matched each donor with a specific family that lost a home or substantial belongings in the tornado. Donors contacted their Joplin family to determine need, then purchased and sent needed items, e.g. pillows, blankets, flatware, etc.
- **INDONESIAN TSUNAMI – 2004-5 and HAITIAN EARTHQUAKE – 2010 – “Pennies from Heaven”**
A project that raised \$5,000 in change from schoolchildren at 4 schools for the Tsunami relief effort and Haitian earthquake victims.
- **HURRICANE KATRINA – 2005**
 1. It's in the Bag/The Home Essentials Project- F-to-F connected over 1,000 Katrina families with an equal number of sponsoring families who helped supply them with basic essentials (toasters, pots, blankets, towels, clothing, etc.) that were lost. Sponsoring families were matched with Katrina families referred to F-to-F by The Red Cross, the Salvation Army and the United Way, among others.
 2. Through the “Guest Shopper” program in 2006, F-to-F raised funds from corporations and other groups for Hurricane Katrina families. A member of Family-to-Family used those funds to act as a “volunteer shopper,” contacting

Katrina families, finding out what they needed most, shopping for them, and shipping them the items.

3. Holiday Toy Drive – F-to-F organized a toy drive in December 2005 for Katrina families in the 7 gulf communities that yielded over 15,000 donated toys, wrapping paper and ribbon.

Newsworthy

Among others, Family-to-Family has been profiled by the following media:

NBC Nightly News	USA Today
CNN: “CNN Heroes”	The Huffington Post
CBS News	Woman’s Day
ABC: “Good Morning America”	Family Circle Magazine
Direct TV: Hometown Heroes	People Magazine
The New York Times	Publisher’s Weekly
The Miami Herald	Oprah Magazine
The Seattle Times	Reader’s Digest
Detroit Free Press	The New York Daily News
Associated Press	Woman’s World
Christian Science Monitor	WICN-NPR Radio
The Wall Street Journal	

Our Team

We are operated by two full time and 4 part time staff members, along with a team of committed volunteers. In addition to using the collective assistance of our donor families across the country, our management is overseen by a team of men and women with experience in the arts, law, business management, and child welfare/non-profit management. The day-to-day operations are managed by our founder Pam Koner.

Contact Us

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