Eat yogurt, lose belly fat!
Breakthrough Japanese research! Lose 7 lbs and 2" in 3 days, harnessing probiotics to block belly fat!

Cook up some Thanksgiving!
46 scrumptious recipes for all your family's soon-to-be favorites!

Make money working from home!
Scam-free ways to rake in thousands a month!

Beby-bye, tiredness!
Boost your all-day energy in the time it takes to shower!
“Together we can help make miracles happen!”

“I’ve been praying for a miracle,” a pastor in an impoverished town in America’s heartland told New York single mom Pam Koner. “I’m no miracle, Pam thought. I’m only one person. But when she decided to reach out, so did many more folks, giving families in need all over food, friendship… and hope!

“Mama,” LaCheir Daniels, six-year-old son, groaned, “I’m hungry.”

I know, little man, the single mom of five sighed silently.

Years earlier, she’d gone back to school for her GED, longing to make a better life for herself and her children. But there were few jobs to be had nearby. And now, at the end of month, the food stamps she received had already been used. The small food pantry at church was depleted, too.

So LaCheir stood before her cupboard, staring at shelves lined with little more than dust. There was a single box of pasta; in the fridge, just a few meaty bones. There was no milk, no cream, no green. And after filling the children’s plates, there wouldn’t even be enough left for her.

But at least my babies’ bellies won’t ache tonight, LaCheir thought. And yet, her own stomach rumbled with hunger, she panicked: What will we eat tomorrow? Little did she know that thousands of miles away, a chain of giving was about to be set in motion that would stretch not only to her little town of Pembroke, Illinois, but clear across the country…

Tapped by an angel

For Pam Koner, it was an ordinary Sunday. Sitting on her deck, she was thumbing through The New York Times when her eyes fell on a photo.

In it, a young girl with limbs as skinny as pipe cleaners lay on a dingy, torn mattress, nibbling on a boiled chicken bone.

She must be from an impoverished third-world country, Pam thought. But when she read the caption, the Hastings-on-Hudson, New York, mom of two’s breath caught. That child lived in the heartland of America!

Pembroke, Illinois, the article mentioned, was just an hour from Chicago. Yet it might as well have been a universe away: There were few grocery stores, no banks, just tiny gravel roads and ramshackle homes where families often went without food.

Moved to tears—and feeling like an angel had tapped her on the shoulder—Pam went inside, where her refrigerator was full. “Look at this,” she told her daughter, “Can you imagine not having enough to eat?”

Reading along, Olivia, 15, and Chloe, 11, agreed: “We have to do something!”

So, tracking down the writer of the article, Pam got a number for a pastor in Pembroke.

“I’ve been praying for a miracle,” he told her, and tears welled in Pam’s eyes again. “I’m not a miracle, she thought. I’m just one person.

But that night, Pam wrote to the families she knew from the childcare business she ran.

What if we formed a community of donors? she proposed. If we match a family here with a family in Pembroke, maybe we can help make miracles happen…

Neighbors across the miles

The response was overwhelming. “We’re in!” friends and neighbors—16 in all—said. Some donated whatever spare money they could. Others raid their pantries, boxing up macaroni and cheese, spaghetti and soup and sending them to the addresses Pam had been given of the neediest families in Pembroke.

“Thank you for this opportunity to be part of something wonderful!” they told Pam. And Family-to-Family (Family-To-Family.org), a nonprofit that matches families with more to families in America’s most impoverished communities, was born.

Soon, thanks to families and stores in Newton, Massachusetts, and Atlanta; Houston and Woodstock, Vermont, families living in dilapidated trailers in New Mexico and on the streets of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, no longer had empty stomachs. Children in the Appalachian mountains had toys to play with that Christmas. Elderly folks in Lennox, South Dakota, had coats and gloves for the winter.

And as Pam and other donors made care packages with whatever they could for “their” families, tucking in notes and photographs, a closeness began to form, bridging the miles.

“We’re neighbors,” explains Kate Caulfield, a San Francisco resident who “adopted” a widow in Burton, Michigan, and her two sons. “We just don’t happen to live near each other.”

Last Valentine’s Day, Kate sent them heart-shaped Rice Krispie treats. Her husband, a sports agent, chats up one of the boys—a high-school football player.

That connection, Pam says, is why new chapters of Family-to-Family are launching, despite so many Americans facing economic hardships. Or, as one family recently confided: “We’re struggling ourselves right now, but we want to keep this as part of our budget. During tough times like these, we need to be connected more than ever.”

It’s exactly what Pam had hoped for when she started Family-to-Family. And today, eight years later, Family-to-Family provides about 14,000 meals for 2,000 families every month and has grown to include programs like Books for Life, helping less fortunate kids to know the joy of reading; and Let Them Eat Cake aiming to brighten needy children’s birthdays.

“What a gift it is to be able to touch and change lives,” Pam smiles. “This has certainly changed mine!”

—Kristin Higson-Hughes