

Advertisement

- Free use of any bank's ATM
- Free checks
- Free online bill payment
- Free Visa® CheckCard

Get rewarded with National City Checking.

National City

Your points. Your checking.

Learn More

Member FDIC.



- Home
- News
- Travel
- Money
- Sports
- Life
- Tech
- Weather

Health and Behavior

Inside News

- Buy a car
- Event tickets
- Job search
- Real estate
- Shopping

Homeless kids' wish lists have a lens on the future

Updated 11/28/2006 10:32 AM ET

E-mail | Save | Print | Reprints & Permissions | [RSS](#)

By Ashley Bleimes, USA TODAY

Most holiday greeting cards feature rosy-cheeked Santas, serene snowscapes or trumpeting angels dusted with glitter and filled with cheery yuletide greetings.

But the cards created by a group of homeless children and teens at two Salvation Army shelters in Raleigh, N.C., and Orlando are different. Instead of Santa, they have pictures of such cherished dreams as a college degree or a new home.

In October, the youngsters set out with disposable cameras to photograph things they wished for during the holidays. But instead of iPods or PlayStations, these photos showed a hunger for a better life for themselves and their families.

"I didn't want material things," says Tiffanie Stewart, 17, of Orlando. "I asked for smiles on my mom, a house and a car to get around."

Now, with the help of celebrity photojournalist Linda Solomon, who also has a longtime interest in bringing photography to underprivileged young people, the wishes and pictures they took are being printed on holiday cards and sold to the public. General Motors, which financed the program, says 100% of the proceeds will go to Salvation Army shelters in their home cities.

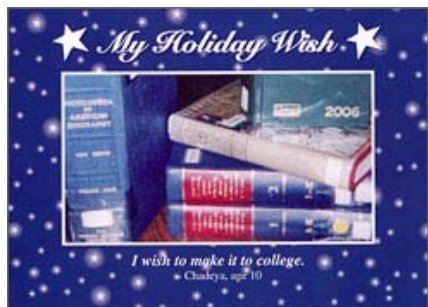
There are many reasons families end up at Salvation Army shelters, say those who run them. Sometimes, if the mother is the family's sole provider, an unexpected illness can trim a tight budget to the point at which she can no longer pay rent. Other times, life at home becomes dangerous, and the only option is to move into the shelter until a safer home can be found.

But Salvation Army Maj. Sam Henry, who is in charge of the Women and Children's Transitional Living Center of Orlando,



Enlarge By Linda Solomon

Chadeya Byrd, 10, of Orlando photographed a representation of one of her Holiday wishes for a holiday card.



Enlarge By Linda Solomon

A holiday card featuring a photograph by Chadeya Byrd.

says being able to take pictures and see them on cards has helped the kids realize the possibilities for the future. "Some of the things they wished for was something for their brother, sister or mom, not for toys for themselves," he says. "It just tears your heart out."

Solomon, of Birmingham, Mich., led workshops in the two cities over three days, teaching children how to hold a camera and take pictures. Then, each child wrote down a list of wishes and set out to put his or her dreams on film.

"It made me feel so famous, so real," says Anneka Hooper, 12, of Raleigh. "I wouldn't trade it for nothing."

Anneka has been at the Salvation Army Women and Children's Emergency Shelter in Raleigh for about 2 1/2 months with her mother and three siblings.

After school one day, she took her camera and thought about her wishes for a new home. A little while later, she found the perfect house to photograph, complete with trees in the yard filled with bright fall leaves.

Ashley Delamar, director of operations at the Salvation Army in Raleigh, has embraced the program. "These lucky horseshoes don't land on your doorstep very often," he says. The program was so successful in boosting kids' confidence and self-esteem that it will continue as an after-school program.

"When (kids) are down, it's a project like this that makes them feel not forgotten," says Tamiko Byrd, whose daughter Chadeya participated in the Orlando project.

"Being here, you're at your lowest point," Byrd says. Giving children a voice helps them "look at the brighter side, know that it's not only going to be shelter-living."

Related Advertising Links

What's This?

23 Super Foods Found

Eat Yourself Healthy with Haagen Dazs, Peanut Butter and More
Bottomlinesecrets.com/superfoods

Advertisement

Rozerem
ramelteon 8-mg tablets

enter here for a chance to win

ROLLOVER FOR IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

ROLLOVER FOR OFFICIAL SWEEPSTAKES RULES

ROZEREM™ IS A TRADEMARK OF TAKEDA PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY LIMITED AND USED UNDER LICENSE BY TAKEDA PHARMACEUTICALS NORTH AMERICA, INC. LIDOXIN® (FLUOXIPRONE) IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF SOLWAY PHARMACEUTICALS, INC. ©2007 TAKEDA PHARMACEUTICALS NORTH AMERICA, INC. RAH-01337

E-mail features

E-mail newsletters

Sign up to receive our free Daily Briefing e-newsletter and get the top news of the day in your inbox.

E-mail [GO](#)

Select one: HTML Text

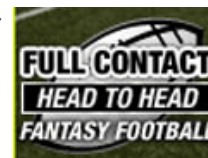
Breaking news E-mail alerts

Get breaking news in your inbox as it happens

Featured Advertiser

What's this?

FANTASY FOOTBALL - PLAY FOR PRIZES
Head-to-head competition; new draft applet and live scoring data.
fantasygames.usatoday.com



Delamar believes the project has therapeutic value. "Getting kids to talk is almost impossible," he says. "They come to life with the photographs."

Chadeya, now 11, says the project gave her something to do while staying at the shelter. Delamar notes that many times shelters are so focused on the parents, there is no time to make sure the children are fully engaged.

Chadeya wished to go to college, so she went to the library with her mom and stacked a pile of encyclopedias and almanacs together to photograph.

"If I go to college, I can get an education; it'll be easier to get a house and a job," she says. She also wants to continue taking pictures. "When my sister gets older, I'll take a picture of her throwing her hat in the air at graduation."

The cards (\$25 for 14 in Raleigh and 17 in Orlando) are available at keepthebelling.org (Raleigh) and salvationarmyorlando.org (Orlando). The message inside: "Wishing You a Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year."

Posted 11/27/2006 8:30 PM ET

Updated 11/28/2006 10:32 AM ET

E-mail | Save | Print | Reprints & Permissions | [RSS](#)

Sponsored Links

ATT: Registered Nurses

Advance Your Career with a BSN Degree from a Top Online University!
EducationGuides.com/NursingDegrees

FREE Health Insurance Quotes & Expert Help

Affordable Health Plans for Singles, Families, and Businesses. Easy Form, No Cost or Obligation. LTC, Life, ...
<http://www.MostChoice.com>

Avoid the Nursing Home

Learn how to banish the aches, pains, and illness that come with aging
Boardroom.com/poweraging

Advertisement



Newspaper Home Delivery - Subscribe Today

[Home](#) • [News](#) • [Travel](#) • [Money](#) • [Sports](#) • [Life](#) • [Tech](#) • [Weather](#)

About USATODAY.com: [Site Map](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Jobs with Us](#) | [Terms of Service](#)
[Privacy Policy/Your California Privacy Right](#) | [Media Kit](#) | [Press Room](#) | [Reprints and Permissions](#)

News Your Way: [Mobile News](#) | [Email News](#) | [Add USATODAY.com RSS feeds](#)

Partners: [USA WEEKEND](#) | [Sports Weekly](#) | [Education](#) | [Space.com](#)

Copyright 2007 USA TODAY, a division of Gannett Co. Inc.