



**Name of Project:** Blessing Bags for Homeless

**Chapter Submitted:** New Hope / Rita Johnson

**Programming Area:** Community Connections

**Type of Project:** Service

**Project Goal:** Collect items that homeless men and women need when they are on the street. Then place all the items in a 2-gallon zip-lock bag and distribute them to chapter members, shelters, and food shelves so they can be given to those who need them.

- Planning Steps:**
1. Approve the project.
  2. Create a spreadsheet with all the items that you want to include in the bags you are assembling.
  3. Winter is the time with the biggest need. Here is a list of possible items:
    - a. Mittens/gloves
    - b. 2 hand warmers
    - c. Winter cap
    - d. Warm calf-length socks
    - e. Hand towel
    - f. Washcloths
    - g. Bar of soap
    - h. Toothbrush
    - i. Full-size toothpaste
    - j. Tooth brush holder
    - k. Small Kleenex pack
    - l. Regular size deodorant
    - m. 2 Swiss Miss hot chocolate packs
    - n. 2 snack bars
    - o. 2 beverage packets
    - p. Spoon
    - q. 2 other sizes of plastic Ziplock bags to keep some things separate
  4. After you create the spreadsheet, the lowest price of each item can be entered.
  5. Calculate the total cost per bag
  6. Decide how many bags you would like to assemble
  7. New Hope was able to assemble 36 bags with an estimated cost of \$455

**Project Details:**

1. Create a Sign-up Genius
  - a. Send to members with the items to purchase or find
  - b. Some items can be cheaper when bought in large quantities
  - c. Donations from the dental office may be obtained
  - d. Caps and gloves can be purchased at second-hand stores
  - e. Many personal items can be purchased at the dollar store
2. Extra Ziplock snack bag for the drink packs, spoon
3. 1 Quart bag to put the washcloth and soap in
4. Get chapter members together and bring all your items to assemble the bags.
5. Members can hand them out in person if they wish
6. Other bags can be dropped off at select locations

**Ways to Promote:**

Discuss at chapter meetings, include articles in the newsletter, and have members speak to friends about outside donations. The bags that were not taken by members to distribute will go to a homeless shelter and local food shelf, where they can be given to the homeless and not just handed out to people shopping at the food shelf.

**Key Takeaways:**

We were surprised by how many bags we could do and how many homeless people we could help. Over half of the chapter had the opportunity to donate or help assemble, and many will be able to personally contact and impact the life of a homeless person in their community. The total hours were about 20, and that doesn't include the time involved in distributing the Blessing Bags.

Got healthy snack items with 2 or more items per packet, such as granola or Belvita bars. Some items are not as important as others, so if money is limited, don't include those that a homeless person wouldn't consider important. Examples: toothbrush holders, a snack bag, hand warmers, and 2 beverage packets.

If doing it in the winter, remember that deodorant and toothpaste can freeze if left in cars until given out. That is also the reason we didn't include a bottle of water. But water would be great for summer bags.

