

IT DOESN'T TAKE A LOT OF TIME TO MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE



CHEERY CARDS

FAMILY SERVICE MATTERS

Having fun together as a family—while making a real difference in the lives of others—brings parents and children closer by inspiring important conversations about values. Plus it helps families develop a sense of pride and purpose, and the feeling of being part of the community.

THE ISSUE OF ILLNESS AND ISOLATION

Since the 1980s, loneliness in the US has doubled. In two recent studies, up to 40 percent of adults categorized themselves as lonely. Loneliness does more than make us feel sad—it actually can make us sick. You can help those suffering from social isolation by making cards for people who might otherwise be alone during the holiday period.

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- What it might be like to be sick or hospitalized for a long period of time.
- Ways we can cheer someone who needs their spirits lifted. Who you'll be helping
- A local children's hospital, nursing home or veteran's home

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Blank cards and envelopes
- Markers and other decorating supplies, such as stickers, stencils, tape, ribbon, jewels, glue sticks, stamps and stamp pads
- Stamps (optional)

IDEAS TO CHAT ABOUT

1. Why might it feel good to receive a handmade card?
2. Why is it important to send cards to people who are sick, isolated or lonely?

KEEP THE GIVING GOING

1. Set up a card-making "station" at home – with paper, envelopes and decorating supplies. When anyone in the family has some down time and wants to spread some cheer, everything will be ready to go.
2. Expand your card-making efforts to friends who are going through a tough time. Or use your handmade cards to express gratitude to a neighbor, family member or community member who has made a positive difference in your family's life.

PROJECT INSTRUCTIONS

1. Find an organization that will accept your letters or hearts.
2. Gather your family or a group of families to create the cards.
3. Gather your supplies and materials. You'll need:
 - a. Heart shaped template or nice stationary
 - b. Coloring utensils: colored pencils, colored pens, crayons, markers, etc.
 - c. Decorating tools: construction paper, glue, paint, etc. (we don't recommend using glitter)
4. Vary tasks depending on the age of the children participating. Younger children can have fun decorating cards, while older youth can help write words of encouragement.
5. Host the card making event! Tell participants a bit about the people they are decorating cards for and why what they're doing matters.
6. Collect the completed cards at the end.
7. Deliver the cards to your organization.

BONUS!

If you make heart shaped words of encouragement, send them Maxwell Suprenant at Catching Joy, Inc., P.O. Box 125, Waban, MA 02468. His organization donates cards to people who are sick or in need of encouragement, and delivers them hundreds at a time!

SAMPLE BUDGET

Item	Number of Items	Price
Box of Envelopes	1	\$3.50
Construction Paper	1	\$3.50
Box of Markers	1	\$3.99
Stamps	1	\$0.49
Roll of Stickers	1	\$2.50
TOTAL		\$13.98

REFLECTION

Have participants come together after the project is over. Challenge each family member to come up with 5 words that describe the day's experience in response to the questions below. If there is more than one family, consider forming teams!

- Why was it important to do this project?
- How did you help?
- What was it like to volunteer with your family?
- What was the funniest part of the experience?
- What volunteer activity would you like to do next?