

From: Amber Coben
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Subject: Hello Friends / Vogel Alcove Auxiliary

Hello Friends.

I had a truly amazing experience this morning and I want to tell you all about it. I am new member of the Vogel Alcove Auxiliary Board, which supports the Alcove, a daycare center for homeless children. My primary focus is the creation and implementation of a new BIRTHDAY BUDDIES program -- in essence, the program assigns volunteers to bring treats and a modest gift for each Alcove child on his or her special day. This morning I planned to do a trial run so I could figure out any kinks before actual volunteers begin the program. Well here is the most amazing thing I learned today: the program is simply going to work because kindness and goodness and generosity don't require a formula or a script. The program is going to work, because it will.

I entered the Alcove with a colorful cake and a present for a sweet, precious, homeless, 4 year-old boy named Blake (his picture is attached, he is the boy on the left in the plaid shirt). I walked into Blake's classroom and asked if someone was having a birthday? His big blue eyes twinkled as he raised his sweet little hand and said, "I am." I walked over and gave him a big hug, and handed him the gift I brought (warm pajamas, colorful blocks and a pack of matchbook cars). I handed a birthday cake to his teachers, so they would have it for a little party in Blake's honor later in the day. I wished Blake a very HAPPY BIRTHDAY, got in my car, and cried and cried all the way home. This sweet little boy doesn't have a home, he doesn't have a bed, he likely won't have another warm meal after he leaves the Alcove tonight until he returns in the morning. BUT he got to feel special, if only for a moment, on his 4th birthday. That is what the BIRTHDAY BUDDIES program is designed to do....bring a little happiness and joy to these kids on their special day.

You may or may not know this, but Vogel Alcove serves a broad segment of the homeless population in Dallas by providing free childcare and preschool for young children living in local homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, and transitional housing programs. In a warm, nurturing environment, the Alcove welcomes 115 homeless children, six weeks to five years old, without regard to race, ethnicity or religion. Licensed by the State of Texas, the center operates year-round, Monday-Friday from 7am-6pm. This is a special place indeed. Without reliable and accessible free childcare, homeless parents with young children would be unable to seek or continue employment, complete an education, or attain permanent housing.

So here is what I would like to ask of you:

1. Please visit the website and learn more about the Alcove. <http://www.vogelalcove.org>. As you learn more, you will see that these children are like yours and mine. They are beautiful, bright-eyed, eager, vulnerable and totally dependent on the adults around them to care and provide for them.
2. Learn about the Auxiliary and the good work we are doing to support Vogel Alcove. Please consider joining for a \$100 annual donation (\$150 for couples). The membership form can be found at <http://www.vogelalcove.org/pages/auxiliary>
3. Volunteer to be a birthday buddy and help me provide these children, who have so little, some of the happiness they so deserve on their birthday. The time requirement will be minimal, the monetary requirement will be small, but the good you will do for a child and for yourself will be PRICELESS.

Please call me or email me with any questions big or small. I look forward to growing this new program with you in the days and months ahead.

Click on the link above and join now....let me hear from you when you have done it!!! Please forward this to anyone you know who could use a little feel good in their life by serving these most deserving young people.

Best and Warmest Regards.
Amber Coben