



## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Live interviews with Executive Director Celeste Edmunds and/or author Richard Paul Evans are available.

### **The Christmas Box International Charity Seeks Community Support for 1,000 Kid's Summer and School Essentials**

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**(SALT LAKE CITY, UT – June 14, 2023)** This summer, The Christmas Box International aims to bring joy and support to over 1,000 abused and neglected children in Utah. As part of the annual Christmas in July Campaign, the organization is calling on the public to join their mission by donating funds and essential items for children and families served by The Christmas Box House emergency shelters and 22 statewide resource centers.

Since 1996 The Christmas Box International has provided shelter and essential items for more than 140,000 children. "During the holidays, we are blessed to collect toys, blankets, and winter clothing for the kids. For many kids, summertime is a chance to unwind, spend time with family, and often enjoy the fun activities that summer brings. But things are very different for children coming to the Christmas Box House, and we try to live up to our motto that *every child deserves a childhood*," states Celeste Edmunds, The Christmas Box International executive director.

The Christmas Box International is asking for the community's help to prepare kiddos for their summer and back-to-school essentials. "We are seeking swimsuits, sunscreen, hygiene kits, \$50 Visa birthday cards, and school backpacks and supplies."

As a child who grew up in the child welfare system, Edmunds knows firsthand what these youth are going through. "When youth stay at The Christmas Box House, we want the children to have a sense of normalcy by providing them the essentials they would "normally" have at home. In addition to providing them with their necessities, we also work with the community to provide summer activities such as going to Lagoon or a water park, visiting the Zoo or the Aquarium, or simply eating out. Although their lives are difficult, all children deserve the chance to have fun and carefree summer experiences."

"Safety isn't seasonal," said Richard Paul Evans, founder, and chair of The Christmas Box International. "We serve children 365 days a year and need to make shelter and resources available for families served by the state."

Evans said the charity works in partnership with Salt Lake County Youth Services and the Division of Child & Family Services, and there are online Christmas Wish Lists of the specific needs of children and families.

Donations are accepted Monday through Friday, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm. Drop-off location sites are available on the website at <https://thechristmasbox.org/wish-lists-2023/>. The community can learn more about The Christmas Box International, and questions regarding needs may be directed to [kristin@thechristmasbox.org](mailto:kristin@thechristmasbox.org).

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#### ***About The Christmas Box International***

- *The Christmas Box International was founded in 1996 by New York Times best-selling author Richard Paul Evans after his first novel, The Christmas Box, became a global bestseller.*
- *The Christmas Box International partners with local, national, and international groups to improve the quality of life for children, teens, and young adults who are victims of abuse, neglect, trafficking, or are facing homelessness.*

*The mission is simple: Every child deserves a childhood.*

- *Over the last two decades, The Christmas Box International has protected more than 140,000 children. In 2021, The Christmas Box House International served 10,689 youth, providing shelter for more than 11,966 days of care.*
- *The Christmas Box House is an emergency shelter for children ages 0-18 who have been removed from their homes because of abuse, trafficking, or homelessness. Utah has three locations: Moab, Salt Lake, and Ogden. Between all three Christmas Box House locations, an average of 1,000 siblings each year can stay together.*
- *The Christmas Box International has 22 resource rooms throughout 14 counties in Utah, from St. George to Tooele, to Logan. Christmas Box Resource Rooms are located in a Christmas Box House emergency shelter or a Division of Child & Family Services office to provide resources to caseworkers who have had to remove a child from their home because of abuse or neglect and may not be staying at a Christmas Box House emergency shelter.*