**“BIRTHDAY IN A BAG” SERVICE PROJECT**

Everyone deserves a birthday party! Right? For some families, the thought of putting together everything needed to celebrate a child’s birthday may be overwhelming, outside that family’s budget or, if they are experiencing homelessness, impossible. Here’s where **YOU** can make a difference.

Plan a service project to put together bags containing everything a family might need to make a child’s birthday that much brighter — we call it **“Birthday** **In A Bag.”** Present the bags to a local food pantry to make available to their clients in need. Once your Aktion Club decides to take on this project, determine how many bags your club will make. Small Clubs might only be able to put together four or five bags, while larger clubs can plan on putting together 10, 12 or more bags to distribute.

What goes into a **“Birthday In A Bag?”** The items you decide to include are only limited by your imagination, but here is a starter list — though by no means does everything on this list have to go into each bag.

**Items for a “Birthday In A Bag”:**

* One large paper bag, preferably with a handle — either a decorated gift bag (like those you could find at a Dollar Store) or a paper grocery bag. You can even approach a grocery store for a donation of paper bags to decorate yourselves with a birthday theme.
* One box of cake mix (large enough for a 9” x 13” cake pan). Pillsbury’s Funfetti cake mix is often on sale.
* One aluminum disposable 9” x 13” cake pan OR an aluminum disposable cupcake pan with cupcake liners
* One can of ready-made cake frosting
* One pack of birthday candles
* One pack of small paper plates
* One pack of plastic forks
* One pack of birthday napkins
* One birthday card — see card sample and template
* One small birthday surprise/gift

**Optional items:**

* Party hat for the birthday child and guests
* Party decorations — (e.g., a “Happy Birthday” sign, streamers, balloons)
* Guest treat bags for party attendees
* Party favors for the guest treat bags
* Items for an activity or game during the party

**How do you get the items for your “Birthday In A Bag” project?**

Ask your sponsoring Kiwanis Club if some of their members might purchase and donate items. You can also post about the project on your club’s Facebook or other social media page and ask members of the community to help make it possible through cash or item donations. Better yet, get an article in your local newspaper to get publicity for your Club and your project!

**Once your club members have assembled items for the bags, it’s time to get creative!**

Club members can write “Happy Birthday” on plain gift bags or paper grocery bags and decorate them with birthday pictures like balloons. If your club members don’t feel very artistic, print a picture from the computer and have them glue it onto the bag.

Instead of purchasing birthday cards for the bags, have your club make cards — or better yet, design a card as a club that can be printed on an 8 ½” x 11” piece of card stock. Have your Club members sign their first names on a paper any which way, scan the paper, save it as a JPEG and insert that JPEG as the back cover of your card! Then print cards for as many bags as you are making — and keep the design on your computer for future bags.

A sample card and template have been attached to the email with this handout. Fill out the template with the name of your Aktion Club and have your club members sign the card or type in their names. This now becomes your master card to print for all your bags.

Instead of purchasing birthday hats, you can make a hat out of newspaper. Better yet, have club members and your sponsoring Kiwanis Club collect the Sunday Comics from their newspapers and use sheets of colorful comics to make your birthday hat. There are many online sites with directions to make a folded hat out of newspapers.

A small gift/treat for your birthday child can be something like a children’s book (new or slightly used) or a candy treat. To make a candy treat extra special, all you need is an empty toilet paper roll, some small candies (hard candy would be better than chocolate) and birthday wrapping paper. Fill your toilet paper roll with candies, then place the roll on its side on a piece of birthday wrapping paper that is four inches longer than the cardboard roll. Center the roll on the paper, leaving two inches of paper on either side, and then wrap the paper around the roll. Tape the paper so it stays wrapped around the cardboard roll and then twist the two inches of paper extending from each end of the roll. Secure the twists with tape so your treat will not unroll in the bag.

**Once your bags are all done,** be sure to take a photo of your club members with the bags for your Facebook page and scrapbook. Then have your advisor deliver the bags to whatever food pantry your club had determined should receive them! You can be happy that you have brought a smile to a child as they celebrate a birthday with family or friends.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ONE AND ALL!**