

## SERVICE PROJECT – Birthday Boxes



Many youth have reported their birthdays as being a difficult time for them. They are away from their families and friends and some residential sites do not do anything for birthdays. One site came up with a solution designed by their youth.

The main idea is to create a Birthday Box for teens. This should be an inexpensive small bag of goodies that would fit most youth in your facility.

### Materials:

- Cardstock
- Markers (various sizes & colors)
- Scissors
- Music to play during activity
- Small gift bags
- Items to put into the bags

**PREPARATION:** Discuss how youth feel being away from family and friends when their Birthday comes around. Brainstorm ideas to brighten someone's day.

**ACTION:** Gather materials and have youth create cards of Birthday wishes to put into the bags. Be creative and make the cards fun and colorful. Have them list out the items they would like to put into the bags. Have them cost out the items and choose what would make sense economically to include.

Once items are decided on and purchased, have the group put the bags together and decide where to keep until a Birthday rolls around.

Put on music to help youth focus and add to the enjoyment of the activity.

**REFLECTION & CELEBRATION:** Help the youth celebrate a good deed well done! Youth can choose how they'd like to celebrate. At the celebration, reflect on the project. Some possible reflection questions:

- What did you learn about people celebrating birthdays?
- What do you hope others gain from your efforts?
- Have each person share what celebrating birthdays looked like for them growing up?
- What is one thing you hope others might get out of receiving a birthday bag?
- What is one way you would like to celebrate your next birthday?

**Facilitator:** Locate an area for birthday bags to be stowed and safe. Keep the youth responsible for knowing about birthdays and letting you know for the celebration planning.