

# 4<sup>th</sup> Annual NCACDSS Best Practices Awards Nomination Form

Category: ISC#8 Tier 2  
Innovations In Services to Customers

## Project Title: Birthday Cakes for Foster Kids

- 1. Project/Program Summary:** Briefly summarize the project's history, purpose, timeline and budget. Ms. S., the cake lady, always had a special place in her heart for children. When she retired, she wanted to fulfill that place in her heart for kids. She discussed the idea of making birthday cakes for children in foster care with her Vicar. He and the members of the St. Andrews Episcopal Church in Haw River, NC supported the idea with open arms.

Now their mission is to supply every child with a birthday cake on his/her birthday because the children need to know that that day is their special day. At the end of every month, Ms. S contacts the facilitator at the Alamance County Department of Social Services for the names and dates of birth of the children with birthdays for the following month. The church members then supply Ms. S with everything needed to make each child a birthday cake. Ms. S. then bakes the cakes and delivers them to DSS, along with a birthday card and the appropriate number of candles. The social worker assigned to the child delivers the cake. On March 14, 2004, the first birthday cake was delivered to the first recipient.
- 2. Innovation:** Why is the program unique? How does your project differ from similar projects? This program is unique because no other service agency or church group had such a project. It is also a program which serves all of our foster children in an individual capacity. Donations to our children in foster care have included Christmas presents, school supplies, luggage, and clothing but never a birthday cake.
- 3. Project Success and Impact:** What were the objectives? How well were they met? How widespread is the impact of the project/program? What is the anticipated long-term impact? Did the project involve collaboration with other agencies, non-profits, businesses, etc.? Describe the outcome of the collaboration.

The objective of St. Andrews Episcopal Church is to make foster children feel important. Every child is special and needs to know that their date of birth is their own unique and special day. The church's way of emphasizing this objective is with a birthday cake, card and candles.

No other agency assists the church with these cakes; it is strictly an internal project in which the entire congregation participates through the donation of supplies. The church's goal is met with smiles every time a birthday cake with candles and a card are delivered to a child on his/her birthday. Some of the older children have sent thank-you notes expressing their appreciation for the gift.
- 4. Project Effort and Difficulty:** How well did the program use limited resources? What obstacles or challenges did you overcome? How was this done? Ms. S. stated her mission did not have to overcome obstacles or challenges. She took her idea to the church and they accepted it without question. Ms. S. stated that if the church had not agreed to participate in her idea, she would have taken this project on alone.

One obstacle DSS had was delivering the cakes timely to the children who were placed out of the county. This issue was resolved by asking social workers what date and time they would like the cake delivered. This helped them coordinate the delivery of the cakes with scheduled visitation or appointments.

5. **Ability to Replicate Project:** Can this project be duplicated in other counties? What could counties do to minimize obstacles and problems? \_\_\_\_\_

This is a wonderful program that could be duplicated in any county. All that is needed to begin the program is someone who is willing, able and committed to the task of baking and delivering.

You would also need a contact person at DSS to provide the names and dates of birth of the children having a birthday each month.