

Spark Joy & Create a Sense of Belonging



THE CARD PARTY INITIATIVE

**HOW TO BE A PART OF A
SUCCESSFUL CARD PARTY EVENT**



**WRITTEN BY:
LISA DEMPSEY**

CEO & Founder

WWW.FORGOTTENWISHESFOUNDATION.ORG

4321 Kingwood Dr. Ste. #58
Kingwood, TX 77339

Friends @ForgottenWishesFoundation.org

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**“EVERY GIFT FROM A FRIEND IS A WISH
FOR YOUR HAPPINESS.” -RICHARD BACH**

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

I began the Forgotten Wishes Foundation out of the desire to impact the lives of my daughter and her friends, who were living in a residential nursing facility for disabled adults in Kingwood, Texas. I saw that too many of the residents were missing family members or friends when their birthdays should have been celebrated; no one was there to remember them on their birthdays or over the holidays each year. I did what I could to bring extra treats and cards for everyone in the facility during the holidays. But it didn't feel like enough.

After a little research, I discovered that over 40% of all adults living with a disability do not have anyone involved in their lives to provide friendship, advocacy, or supportive care in any way. **It was unimaginable to think that so many people were just forgotten about during times of the year when most people were celebrating with friends and family.** I set out to make sure that anyone with a disability who was feeling alone or isolated would be remembered on their birthday and the holidays with wishes for happiness and good cheer with a personalized card and small gifts sent to them in the mail. This small service project soon became a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization that expanded across the country and currently serves individuals in almost all 50 states. Visit the website to read more about our story.

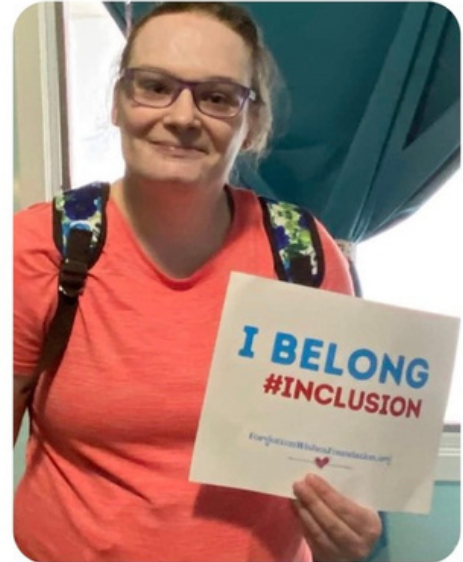
www.ForgottenWishesFoundation.org

Thank so much for being my pal I love receiving mail from your foundation it always makes me smile 😊 god bless you for everything you do for individuals like me



Anika ❤️

APR 28 AT 12:48 PM



OUR MISSION

**To be a source of joy
that inspires a
sense of belonging for people
with disabilities.**

YOUR GUIDE TO HOSTING A SUCCESSFUL CARD PARTY



Let me help you get started hosting or participating in a card party for the Forgotten Wishes Foundation. The cards and letters you will be crafting for us will be sent to one of our Forget-Me-Not Friends Club members. Each one of our club members is unique, and each faces one or more challenges in their life due to a disability. The club members range in age from 3 years old to 80 years old, and they live all over the United States in a variety of home and residential settings.

Many of the people who participate in card parties do not have much experience, maybe not any experience, communicating with or socializing with a person with a disability. One of the great things we get to do through our outreach with the card party initiative is provide some education and disability awareness. I hope that this helpful guide will lead you to be more informed and thoughtful about creating a more inclusive environment and give you some insight into the world of the disability community while helping you make fun cards for our Forget-Me-Not Friends Club members.

*Over the last several years, we have learned what types of cards are being enjoyed by our Forget-Me-Not Friends Club members and which ones are more likely to create a disappointing experience. **The purpose of this guide is to help you craft a meaningful card or letter and to increase your awareness about the community members you are supporting.***

At the end of this guide, you will find all of the instructions to register for your event, get the cards to the Forgotten Wishes Foundation, earn service hours for your volunteer time as a host of an event, and learn how to support our work with a donation. *There is also an option to invite me, Lisa Dempsey, to speak at your Card Party! I will share more about that opportunity and how to invite me to your party.*

DON'T SKIP AHEAD TO "HOW TO REGISTER"

In the next section, I'm going to talk more about having a disability. More specifically, I'm going to share how a Forget-Me-Not Friend Club Member might experience receiving the card or letter you create for them. Don't skip over this part, please. It is an important bit of information that will inform you as you set off to make your card for us today.

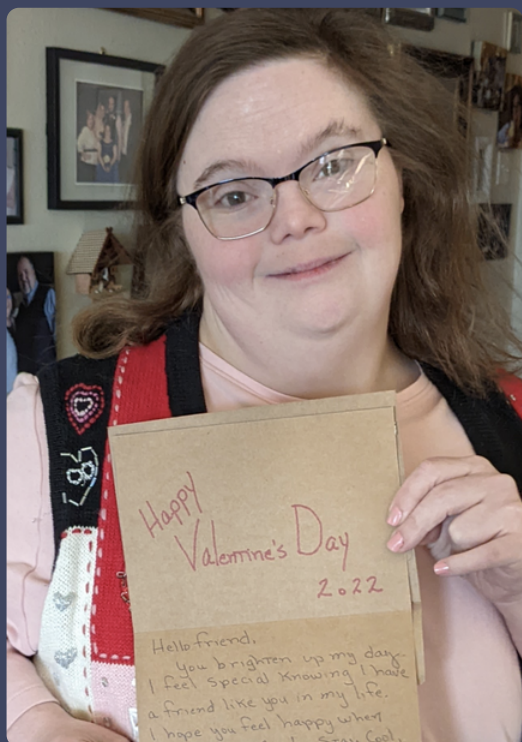
**LISA DEMPSEY
CEO & FOUNDER**



WHAT IS A CARD PARTY?

Our mission is to create a sense of belonging. To have belonging, you need to have community. We created the Card Party Initiative to generate an opportunity for inclusion and provide a space to educate more people about the needs of those living with a disability. **The premise of a card party is that a group of people will gather together, either in person or virtually, and handcraft greeting cards, write letters, or draft messages of friendship inside store-bought cards.** These cards are then distributed to people of all ages across the country with a disability who have registered to participate in the Forget-Me-Not Friends Club program. The Forgotten Wishes Foundation's generous donors ensure that the Forget-Me-Not Friends Club members do not have to pay a membership fee to participate and receive the cards in the mail throughout the year.

The Forgotten Wishes Foundation partners with community groups, corporations, churches, and individuals who want to participate in the fun. Card Parties can be as simple or elaborate as the host of the event chooses to make it. They are as straightforward as a group of women sitting around a table sharing stories and making cards to more elaborate international virtual events with a hundred people participating. Card Parties have even become several families tradition at Thanksgiving time to create cards for those who don't have someone to celebrate the season with now. **Each Card Party is meaningful because it engages participants to remember people in the community who don't have access to socialize freely due to a variety of constraints in their lives derived from their disability.**



I'M JUST NOT CRAFTY!

Cards do not need to be elaborate, just filled with joy from your heart! Some of the best cards have very simple images or store-bought stickers on the front cover that have some meaningful connection to the creator of the card.

We also have participants who use 8.5x11 sheets of stationary paper, and they type a letter to someone, share a little bit about their day, and let the friend know they were thinking of them.

You do not have to be an artist or be crafty to have fun and make a difference when you participate. We even provide sample letters you can use as a guide to help you along the way!

LET'S TALK ABOUT DISABILITY

1 IN 4 PEOPLE HAS A DISABILITY

When most people think of someone with a disability, the first thing they imagine is a person who uses a wheelchair or someone who uses a prosthetic arm or leg. **However, over 80% of all disabilities are considered invisible, meaning that you may not be aware at first glance that someone has a need for support to get through their day.** With this in mind, let me share some of the areas that a person in our club might struggle with when they receive one of your cards.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER THE READER'S EXPERIENCE



SIGHT IMPAIRMENT AND READING DISORDER

Sight Impairment and reading disorders make it important to think about what kind of writing implement and text you will use when you construct your messages. **Use print and avoid cursive or scripted fonts. Use dark ink that stands out on the paper you are using.**



PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS AND MOTOR SKILL FUNCTION

There may be a physical limitation to open the envelope or card. **Someone with motor control issues may find small cards or cards created with fine or thin paper tear easily when they are trying to manipulate it to read.** A person with a physical disability impacting their use of their hands, such as paralyzation, arthritis, palsy, etc., may benefit from a larger size card that is sturdy and easy to stand on its own.



SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDERS

Sensory processing issues play a role in how someone experiences their world. Touch, sound, light, taste, and smell are impacted differently for each person who struggles with sensory processing disorders. **Some people find it physically unbearable if ink, glitter, or dried and crusty tempera paint gets onto their hands or clothes.** Avoid construction paper because the color easily bleeds off onto skin when it becomes damp.

DISABILITY CONTINUED -



AUTISM AND SOCIAL COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

Autism and other social, emotional, and communication disorders make it important to choose your words thoughtfully. **Try not to be too ambiguous, use idioms, or be sarcastic in your writing, as the meaning may not translate well for this group of people, leaving them confused and wondering what you meant.** They may also take what you say quite literally. *Avoid stating that you are BFFs (best friends for life), as this can create an unrealistic expectation by the reader.*



INTELLECTUAL AND COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING DISORDERS

Intellectual and cognitive disorders may leave a person who is much older to experience the world in a more childlike way. **We never want to speak down to or assume someone is not capable of understanding something. We do want you to keep our messages at a level as if you were writing to a nine to twelve-year-old person.** I have spoken to many of our club members without any cognitive functioning challenges, and they assure me they do not feel the cards are too childlike for them and still enjoy receiving them.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND DISABILITY BEFORE BEGINNING YOUR CARD

While we can't share the specifics about each individual or every type of disability someone may encounter, we hope the information we have provided you with today will make the card or letter you are creating for them just the thing that will bring them joy and remind them that they are valued.

Please take a few moments to consider the tips above. Now consider how a person with a sight impairment might struggle if they received a card and the text inside was written using a yellow highlighter marker or a pink ink pen written on bright pink paper. Do you think they feel understood?

Imagine a club member receiving a premade card that says "Thank You" on the outside, and inside, it says, "I'm proud of you. Keep smiling." The intention was good to use a nicely decorated pre-made card and write a cheerful note inside, but it is most likely going to be confusing to someone with Autism or a Cognitive Disability.

Finally, imagine a club member receives a card decorated with glitter, and they use a prosthetic hand, and the glitter adheres to the material the prosthetic is made out of, or a person with a sensory issue or OCD can't get the glitter to come off their hand, or it is gotten onto their clothing. **The positive experience of getting a card from you has just become a negative one, and that is not what we want to happen.**

ACCEPTABLE MATERIALS

SELECTING WHAT TO CREATE YOUR CARD OR LETTER WITH

Blank FOLDING Card Size A7

These cards are made from card stock and are fold-over. The cards measure 5" x 7" and may be either portrait or horizontal cards.



Blank FLAT Card Size A7

These are made from card stock and are flat, nonfolding cards. They measure 5" x 7", either portrait or horizontal cards. They are often used to create invitations and postcards.

Blank FOLDING Card Size A6

These are made of card stock. They are fold-over cards that measure 4" x 6" and may be either portrait or horizontal cards. They are often used as thank you or memo cards.

Store Bought Card Size A7 or A6

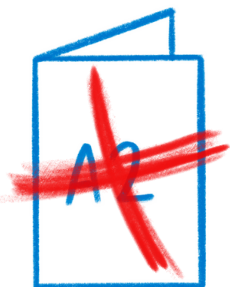
These are cards that are purchased and come with a cover already decorated with an image or colorful designs. They should be blank on the inside to allow the participant to write their own personal message.

Stationery Paper

Stationery paper is a heavier stock of printable paper. It often comes pre-decorated around the border and can be inserted into most printer/copy machines. The size is 8.5" x 11" and will be tri-folded and inserted into a #10 standard envelope.

24 lb Printer/Copier Paper

Typical printer paper is 20# in weight, and for our use, we request a small upgrade to 24# in weight to increase durability and wear. You can create your own designs using programs on your computer: PowerPoint, CANVA.COM, ADOBE, and other design programs can generate some fun graphics. These letters will be tri-folded and inserted in #10 standard envelopes.



4.25"W x 5.5"H



4.5"W x 6.25"H



5"W x 7"H



MATERIALS TO EMBELLISH YOUR CARD

SELECTING HOW TO DECORATE YOUR CARD OR LETTER

- **MARKERS**
- **INK PENS**
- **COLORED PENCILS**
- **WATERCOLORS**
- **FLAT STICKERS - NO PUFFY STICKERS, PLEASE**
- **WASHI TAPE**
- **SCRAPBOOKING PAPER AND MATERIALS**
- **STENCILS**
- **PHOTOGRAPHS OF LANDSCAPES, ANIMALS, FLOWERS, ETC.**
- **YOUR COMPUTER OR TYPEWRITER**

NOTE: DO NOT USE BUTTONS, BEADS, SEQUENCES, PUFFBALLS, GEMS, SEEDS, OR ANY ITEMS THAT COULD BE REMOVED FROM THE CARD AND INGESTED. NO CONSTRUCTION PAPER AND ABSOLUTELY NO GLITTER, PLEASE.



WHAT TO WRITE

HOW TO MAKE A CONNECTION WITH SOMEONE YOU DON'T KNOW

Writing a note to someone is becoming a bit of a lost art, but I know you can do it! You are here today because you feel the importance of feeling seen and being included, and you want to help someone feel remembered in a special way. On our website, there is an article in the NEWS section on "How to Write a Letter to a Stranger," which is a good resource. Honestly, the message you write is more important than the cool image you may have created on your card. This is where the connection and sense of belonging come from. *At the end of the guide are samples of messages and letters written to a Forget-Me-Not Friends Club member.*

Conversation Starters

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU ENJOY DOING?

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO WRITE THE LETTER TODAY?

WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO IN THE NEAR FUTURE THAT YOU ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO?

SHARE A FAVORITE SONG OR QUOTE AND WHY IT HAS MEANING TO YOU.

ASK THE READER WHAT THEY ENJOY.

ASK THE READER WHAT THEY ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO DOING SOON.

TELL THEM SOMETHING YOU LOVE ABOUT WHERE YOU LIVE.

ASK THEM ABOUT WHAT THEY LIKE ABOUT THEIR COMMUNITY.

TELL THEM ABOUT HOW AND WHY YOU DESIGNED THEIR CARD. (FOR EXAMPLE - IS BLUE YOUR FAVORITE COLOR, SO YOU PAINTED THE CARD IN SHADES OF BLUE WATERCOLOR? DOES IT REMIND YOU OF THE OCEAN?)

SHARE A LITTLE BIT ABOUT WHAT YOU DO AT WORK OR SCHOOL.

ARE YOU A FAN OF SOMETHING, SPORTS, MUSIC, THEATER, MOVIES? SHARE THAT WITH THE READER.

TELL THE READER HOW YOU FOUND OUT ABOUT THE FORGET-ME-NOT FRIENDS CLUB, THAT YOU THINK IT IS COOL, AND THAT YOU FEEL LUCKY TO BE ABLE TO CONNECT WITH THEM.

TELL THEM YOU ARE HAPPY TO SHARE THIS PART OF YOUR DAY WITH THEM.

WHAT TO AVOID

IMPORTANT REMINDERS FOR WHAT NOT TO INCLUDE ON YOUR CARD

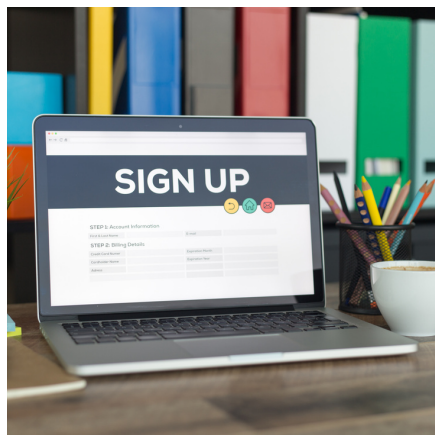


- Please sign the cards with only your first name or first name and first initial. **Do not sign your full name.** You may include the city, the state you live in, and the organization you are participating with for the card party. **Do not include photos of yourself.**
- Please do not include Bible verses, religious symbols, or references to religion. We are nondenominational and have no way of knowing someone's personal belief system.
- **Avoid words and images that may express a more intimate relationship**, such as some depictions of hearts, lips, XOXOXO, "you are loved," "I love you," BFF (best friends forever), best friends, cupids, etc. These can be too easily misconstrued and create a false expectation of a relationship.
- Please avoid short random messages as the only message written inside of your card. "Happy Day!", "You make me smile.", "Warm wishes. You are awesome.", "You rock.", "Happy days and good times.", "Hey, friend.", "Today is a good day to have a good day." are a few examples of what we have received. **These are impersonal statements and do not make a connection or create a sense of belonging. Please take a moment and imagine a person you might be writing your card to. If you are struggling with what to say, take a moment to review the "What to Write Section."**
- **When creating your card, avoid gender-definitive images or graphics, especially on premade store-bought cards.** We currently do not have the capability to sort the cards to send to a specific gender. Avoid creating a card that is for a "princess" or "football player or athlete," for example. You can certainly talk about your love for football or your favorite fairytale princess to whomever your card goes to, but keep the images on the card gender-neutral, please.



HOW TO REGISTER YOUR CARD PARTY EVENT

THIS IS THE FIRST STEP TO HOSTING YOUR EVENT



Visit the Website

Go to www.ForgottenWishesFoundation.org and go to the Get Involved Tab. Click the link to Register your Card Party Event.

Use Your Phone Via Text

Text the word PARTY to 866-511-3883 and you will receive a link to the registration form to complete on your mobile device. Text message rates may apply.

Guest Speaker Opportunity

Lisa Dempsey, the CEO and founder of the Forgotten Wishes Foundation, may be available to give a guest speaking presentation during your card party event. This may be done virtually or in person, depending on the physical location of the event.

There is a small speaking fee requested that may be covered by donations or as a speaking stipend from your company or organization. These funds go directly to supporting our mission and continuing our community outreach.

You'll need to do advanced planning and scheduling, and it should be arranged at least six weeks in advance.

For more information, please email Friends@ForgottenWishesFoundation.org.



HOSTING A VIRTUAL CARD PARTY EVENT

IN PERSON OR ACROSS THE COUNTRY YOU CAN HAVE A GREAT EVENT



VIRTUAL EVENTS

Virtual events can be live via Zoom, Teams, or other live-streaming platforms. Typically, the host of the event sets the day and time. Then, the host will be the speaker and moderator of the event. They may talk a little bit about the Forgotten Wishes Foundation and why this nonprofit was selected as the beneficiary of the volunteer project.

The host should share this guide and any other pertinent instructions to help the attendees better understand the Card Party Initiative. The host will be the person responsible for collecting the cards and letters and then submitting them to the Forgotten Wishes Foundation.

For more information, please email Friends@ForgottenWishesFoundation.org. Be sure to register your event with us prior to having it.

Break Room Virtual Event

Another way to host a virtual event is to create a short video about the Card Party Initiative and send it out with a copy of this guide to your invited guests. Then, set up a card-making station with all of the necessary supplies somewhere in your office or a designated location and direct participants to stop by and create a card. This works great in teachers' lounges, hospital settings, offices, and other locations where people have a space to stop and take a break.

SERVICE HOURS RECOGNITION

ADDITIONAL STEPS ARE REQUIRED TO EARN SERVICE HOURS



SERVICE HOURS RECOGNITION

Complete the online registration form and be sure to mark that you would like to receive recognition for volunteer service hours. **Please note that this may not be used for court-ordered community service hours.** **SIX Hours of volunteer hours will be earned on completion of the event following these steps.**

Please take a few photographs of your party for us to share on Social Media and our Newsletters. They may be emailed to us at friends@forgottenwishesfoundation or IM via our Facebook Page.

Include a letter with your name, address, email, and other contact information and the date of your party with the package of the cards that were made at your party requesting the service hours letter.

Include a testimonial about your experience hosting a card party and what kind of impact it had on your guests.



Testimonial

HOW TO SUMBIT YOUR CARDS

FORGOTTEN WISHES FOUNDATION WILL DISTRIBUTE THE CARS



Please DO NOT Enclose the Cards or Letters inside Sealed envelopes. Each Card and Letter is Reviewed to Ensure Privacy and Appropriate Content.

We would love to receive envelopes with your cards, but please keep them separated from the actual card or letter.

Package your cards and letters into a box, priority mail envelope, or other sturdy mailer that will protect the contents.

Include any additional information required if you are asking for volunteer service hours.

Mail the package to:

**Forgotten Wishes Foundation
4321 Kingwood Dr. Ste. #58
Kingwood, TX 77345
(832) 813-9361**



*Only \$5.00 a
month or \$60.00
covers the cost for
one friend a year.*



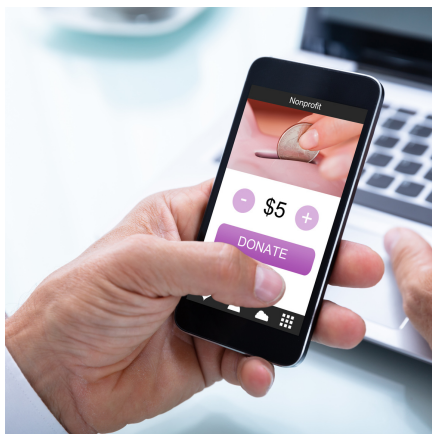
HELP US SEND OUT YOUR CARDS

WE NEED YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO ENSURE THE CARDS ARE MAILED

A note from Joshua

Dear friend,
I'm glad that I'm part of this club.
Thank you for all the letters and packages. I hope you know that you will never be forgotten. By the way, here is a saying from Lego Ninjago Master of Spinjitzu -
"Never put off until tomorrow what can be done today."
Thank you for not forgetting about me.

ForgottenWishesFoundation.org



We cannot fund the Forget-Me-Not Friends Club Program without the support of people like you.

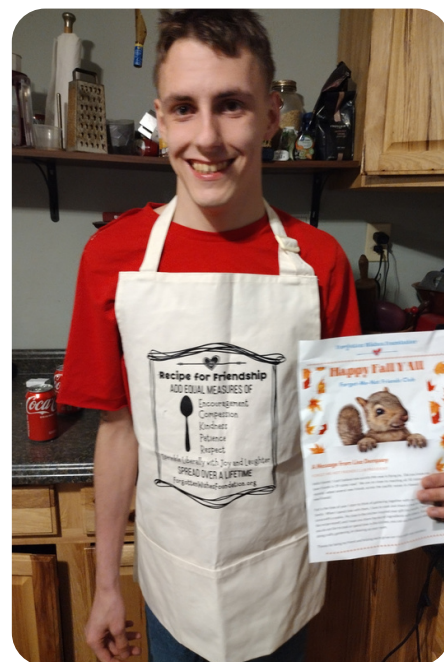
Please consider a minimum donation of \$5.00 for each participant and see if your company will provide you with a matching donation.

Consider posting a Facebook or Instagram Fundraiser as a part of your event to raise funds for Forgotten Wishes Foundation.

Investigate if your company offers nonprofit organizations a stipend on behalf of employees for volunteer hours.

Take up a stamp collection. Many people have random unused postage stamps in their desks or drawers at home that they do not need. We always need stamps!

Donations can be made on the website or by texting the word GIVE to 866-511-3883.



While it is not mandatory to make a donation to host your event, it is greatly appreciated. It provides the funds needed for our mailouts throughout the year to our Forget-Me-Not Friends Club Members.

FORGET-ME-NOT FRIENDS CLUB




**A CLUB
WITH
FRIENDS
LIKE ME**



**Forgotten
Wishes
Foundation®**

www.forgottenwishesfoundation.org

GOT ANY QUESTIONS?

Don't be shy! E-mail us at **friends@ForgottenWishesFoundation.org**



FORGET-ME-NOT FRIENDS CLUB



**A CLUB
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LIKE ME**



**Forgotten
Wishes
Foundation®**

www.forgottenwishesfoundation.org

Do you have a friend, neighbor, or family member who would like to be a member of our Forget-Me-Not Friends Club? This club is free to all individuals with a disability of any age, thanks to our generous donors who support our mission.

Visit our webpage and go to our PROGRAMS section for details and registration. Parents, Legal Guardians, and other Authorized Representatives may register a club member on their behalf.

SAMPLE MESSAGES & LETTERS

TEMPLATES TO FOLLOW TO SPARK JOY AND CREATE CONNECTIONS

Dear Friend,

I heard about the Forget-Me-Not Friends Club through the volunteer work I do for the National Charity League in my school. I'm also in a club called "Best Buddies," and my buddy has Autism. We go to the movies once a month because that is one of his favorite things to do. I think it is cool that you have a Forget-Me-Not Friends Club because not every school has a "Best Buddies" club. I found this fun card at a local shop, and it has lots of swirly colors on the front in shades of blue. Blue is one of my favorite colors. I hope you like it and that it makes you happy.

Your friend,

Lacey,

Kingwood, TX
National Charity League



Cheers friend!

My name is Cassidy, and I am a member of the National Charity League here in Kingwood, TX. It is a club that I belong to, and we try to do nice things to help other people. We found out about the Forget-Me-Not Friends Club, which the Forgotten Wishes Foundation sponsors, and thought it was such a neat club. I really wanted to get involved and send cards and letters to the club members because I know how important it is to feel included.

I love Charlie Brown and his friends from the cartoon strip "Peanuts," especially Snoopy. I found some stickers to use to decorate a card for you today. Have you ever seen any of the TV shows that Snoopy and Charlie Brown are in? I'm using a sticker of Charlie Brown looking inside of his mailbox for a letter. I was imagining you doing the same thing and watching for my card to come! I hope you like it when it gets to you.

Your friend,

Cassidy

Kingwood, TX

SAMPLE MESSAGES & LETTERS

TEMPLATES TO FOLLOW TO SPARK JOY AND CREATE CONNECTIONS

Hey there friend,

What's up? I'm sitting here at my desk, taking a moment to write you this note. I work at a big company in Michigan. I just graduated from college, and this is my first big job. I love the work I'm doing here. I found out about the Forget-Me-Not Friends Club through a friend here at work, and I thought it sounded pretty awesome. I would love it if someone sent me a card! I only get text messages from my friends, and I guess that is ok.

I was wondering what kind of things you like to do. Do you like to listen to music or watch TV? I love to do both! My favorite singer is Taylor Swift. I like lots of different TV shows. When I'm at home, I watch a series about a chef who works in Chicago. I like to watch programs about cooking and food a lot, too.

Have you ever watched the Great British Baking Show? They make some pretty cakes and treats. I also like Cake Boss and Cake Wars. I guess I must really like cake! I think I'll have to bake a cake when I get home tonight. Maybe chocolate cake.

I'm glad I got to take a few minutes today and share a little bit about myself with you. I hope that you have a good week and get to do something that you enjoy. I will be thinking of you here in Michigan!

Your Friend,

Peter J.

Ann Arbor, MI

Hello there friend,

How are you doing today? I'm feeling pretty good, and I'm a little excited about making you this card! I love to paint and use markers. I heard about your club and thought how fun it would be to make you a special card. Today, I'm going to paint you some lily pad flowers on a pond with a frog on one of them. I hope you like frogs. I hope you will keep my card somewhere and when you see it, you will think of me. That would make me feel special. I hope you like it. Have a great week.

Your friend,

LINDSAY

Humble, TX

SAMPLE MESSAGES & LETTERS

TEMPLATES TO FOLLOW TO SPARK JOY AND CREATE CONNECTIONS

Hello friend,

I'm so glad to have the chance to share a minute of my day with you today. I work for a company that makes widgets. On my break, I decided to make a card for you and a few other club members. On the front is a sticker of a silly-looking cat floating in space. I drew in the stars and moon so it looks like he is in outer space. I really like cats. I have two cats named Jester and Sam at home. Do you have any pets?

Later this weekend, I'm going to visit one of my favorite places, the beach. I always feel so happy when I see the sunset at the beach. Anyway, I was thinking I'd send this note today and let you know I was thinking of you today. I hope whatever you do this weekend makes you happy. Cheers!

Your friend,

Joe S.

Glendale, CA



Howdy friend,

Today is a special day! We are having a small gathering of co-workers, and we are making some cards for the Forget-Me-Not Friends Club members. I think it is so cool you have your own club. I decided that I would use some of the pictures I took last weekend to decorate my cards. I visited a museum, and the artwork was amazing. The picture I chose for you is of a fountain that was outside as we were walking to the museum. It is called Mecom Fountain and it is a popular place to visit in Houston where I work. Do you like to visit museums? What kind of places do you like to visit, I wonder. I hope that you have a super week and that you get to do something special.

Sincerely,

Jodi M.

Houston, Tx