



Contact: Kelsey Borgeson
Project Transformation North Texas
214-946-3600
borgeson@ptnorthtexas.org

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SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT + COMMUNITY IMPACT: A WIN-WIN PARTNERSHIP THIS SUMMER

Dallas, TX – May 20, 2020 – Now more than ever, children need resources to nurture their mind, body, and spirit while they are at home during this public health crisis. Researchers are already projecting a "COVID-19 slide" that will compound the existing summer slide that many low-income children experience. As a response to this need, Project Transformation North Texas is seeking to provide each family participating in their program with a "Summer Camp in a Bag" by partnering with a local, small business partner, Toy Maven.

Lauren Richard, Executive Director of Project Transformation North Texas says, "Our goal is that these bags, packed with fun and engaging toys and learning activities, will encourage play-based learning for many children across our community while also helping to sustain Toy Maven, a small business in our community which is all about giving back."

The bags cost approximately \$25 each and can be purchased directly from the Toy Maven website and will be distributed to families in low-income communities across Dallas in both June and July. The "June bag" is already available on the Toy Maven website.

Not only do the bags encourage play-based learning, but by purchasing a bag, you are helping to support a local, small business during a time when COVID-19 has caused financial strain.

The owner of Toy Maven, Candace Williams says, "This opportunity to partner with Project Transformation North Texas means the world to me as a small business owner! As a former teacher of at-risk populations, I am painfully aware of many of the incredible challenges these children and their family's face. I have also volunteered with the organization with my own daughters! This project has given me a clear focus over the past few weeks, and has been a very welcome distraction from the difficulties businesses currently face. I have enjoyed working hard to source items and provide the most value and impact for every dollar spent. As a local business, we have skin in the game and are motivated to make as much of a difference in our local community as we can."

This pandemic continues to highlight and widen societal inequities, further marginalizing already vulnerable communities. Families with fewer financial resources are being impacted disproportionately as they struggle with food insecurity, unemployment, and insufficient digital access and learning opportunities for their children. This is why Project Transformation North Texas is prioritizing the distribution of food, books, fun and educational activities, art supplies, as well as virtual mentoring and peer-to-peer support focusing on social emotional interventions wherever possible.

Casey Mellody-Camacho, VP of Programs for Project Transformation National, says, “I’m hopeful and excited about the way the Project Transformation network is coming together to meet the physical and emotional needs of its communities across the country during this unprecedented time. Summer isn’t canceled! We’re still here. We will help meet the physical needs of children and families by providing food and educational supplies, and we will still provide fun and engaging social emotional and literacy lessons for children and youth led by young adults. We will do our best to bring summer fun right into the homes of our children and families!”

To learn more, please visit www.ptnorthtexas.org or contact Kelsey Borgeson at borgeson@ptnorthtexas.org.

Link to purchase “Summer Camp in a Bag”: <https://thetoyhaven.com/product/project-transformation-june-bag/>

Purchase a bag on behalf of Project Transformation North Texas today and join in a cause that is certain to bring smiles and much-needed learning opportunities to hundreds of children this summer!

About Project Transformation:

Across the country, Project Transformation offers an evidence-based program model that: engages 3,000 vulnerable children with positive young adult role models in a safe, supportive environment that develops both their literacy skills and their character; equips 375 college-age young adults in purposeful leadership and ministry exploration; and, supports urban United Methodist churches in 43 different low-income communities to become a more vibrant, engaging presence within their neighborhoods. Among the many results we deliver, one of our most significant outcomes is that 97% of the children whom we serve avoid the “summer slide” by maintaining or improving their reading levels during the summer breaks. However, our ambition is not simply to support our children as students, but to also give them a foundation for success in college, careers, and service-focused, adult lives.

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