

# Cards for Kids

## A Corporate Donations-to-School Program

Developed by the Greeting Card Association (GCA)

Cards for Kids is a GCA-sponsored program that helps schools use greeting cards as a hands-on language arts and social studies teaching tool, and encourages students to send their cards to community nursing homes, shelters or senior centers. By introducing children to the joys of sending and receiving cards, the result will be adults who purchase cards and then share with *their* children the joys of card sending.

To assist greeting card publishers wishing to participate in this program, the Greeting Card Association has developed the following materials: an operational plan for dealing with card donations to schools, suggested lesson plans for teachers, a sample press release, and a brief overview of tax considerations from participating in the program.

The GCA invites all greeting card publishers to participate in this program. We encourage you to keep the GCA office informed of your efforts and the results, including copies of newspaper articles and response letters you receive, so that we can monitor the nationwide progress of Cards for Kids.

Please address all correspondence to:

Cards for Kids Program  
Greeting Card Association  
1156 - 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 900  
Washington, DC 20005

### Getting Started

Donating cards to schools is very rewarding, but it does involve some work and planning in advance. Schools will want the product close to the actual holiday date, so a storage area will be needed for the cards you are donating.

Schools will be mindful of the religious holidays and the living situations of their students, so someone from either the school or the local community should come in and pick out the cards. Here are some basic steps to follow when planning a Card for Kids program.

**1. Assign an area and an individual within your company to handle the donations.** Choose someone who has an interest in the idea or the program will not succeed. Make space available for card storage. Indicate the importance of this program for your company and unit consumption of greeting cards.

**2. Decide what type of cards (everyday, seasonal or both) you want to offer the school.** It will be easier for you if this decision is yours. We have included lesson plans that address both everyday and seasonal cards.

**3. Contact the Superintendent for the school system, or the principal of a local school.** If the school system is large you may choose to go directly to the principal of an elementary school. In some cities, the mayor is the head of the school system and you must contact his or her office to begin the process.

When speaking with school representatives, you will be offering the donation of the cards, and you may also offer the lesson plans. The town/school will then appoint someone to work with you. Their point person will supply the necessary paperwork for any allowable tax deduction (consult your tax advisor).

**4. A press release should go out** while the lesson plans are being conducted or after the lesson, if the release includes pictures. This is an important step to create positive publicity for the school, your company and the program. A sample press release is included in this material.

## Identifying Product to be Donated

### **Seasonal:**

This is an easy program to put together if you accept seasonal returns from your customers. As you receive returns for each season, place the cards you will not be reprocessing (those that Inventory has identified as obsolete) in boxes. Be sure to discard damaged or soiled cards. Sort the cards to be donated, placing like designs together. If envelopes are sent back with returns, keep the unsoiled envelopes and place them in the boxes with the cards. Place product in a designated donation storage area.

If you do not process seasonal returns at your location, the individual or group in charge of your donation project must work with Inventory to identify cards for schools. Although the appropriate time to do this will vary by company, the procedures will be the same. As you plan a season and identify designs that will be discontinued, have these designs pulled from the bins and delivered to the donation area.

As an example, you might select Valentine's Day as one of your donation holidays. As you plan your inventory for Valentine's Day, identify product you intend to be obsolete. Have this product pulled from the bins and sent to the donation area to be stored. Late October or early November, contact the school's point person. Set a date and time for the school to come in and take the cards. The school's point person will come and review the cards, taking those titles that are appropriate for the grade level and demographics of the student population. Have the school provide the paperwork for any tax deductions at this time. As the cards are being utilized in the school, send out the press release.

**Everyday:**

Everyday product is less straightforward. Schools will usually look for friendship and thank-you cards. Blank cards are also appropriate. Birthday cards tend to be impractical for donation, since not everyone in a class will have family members or friends celebrating a birthday in the same month. As you obsolete an appropriate title, have the inventory sent to your donation center. The school can then call for an appointment to come in and take cards for lesson plans.

**Financial Records and Inventory Contributions**

When you donate inventory as part of the Cards for Kids Program, you may be entitled to claim a business tax deduction for the contribution equal to the tax cost of the inventory. Be sure to obtain a receipt from the school for your records. A simple thank-you letter on the school's letterhead is appropriate if it includes the date the inventory was received, the number of cards donated, and the use of the cards

*Be sure to check with your tax advisor about deductions for donated inventory.* The tax cost of the inventory can be different than its financial accounting cost. For example, the tax cost of inventory that is still being sold to retailers will be different from product that is obsolete and being sold to liquidators.

## Cards for Kids

### Seasonal Card Lesson Plan

**Objective:** To increase student's awareness that they can make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate.

**Preparation:** Choose the recipients of the cards. Senior citizen homes or family shelters are good choices. Determine the number of cards necessary for your choice of recipients.

**Materials:** Greeting cards for the chosen holiday, pencils, crayons, and pens.

**Classroom Time:** 30 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Discuss greeting cards and the recipients you have selected. Why do we send cards? On what occasions are cards sent? Who sends you cards? What do you think life is like for the people in (wherever you have chosen to send the cards)?
2. Discuss what students can do to make others feel good. What can they do that would not cost much money? How do they feel when they receive mail?
3. Pass out the greeting cards to students.
4. Have the children sign the cards. If age-appropriate, have students add wishes for a happy holiday, or draw a picture on the side opposite the card's printed message.
5. Decorate envelopes if they will be delivered directly to the recipients, or address them if they will be stamped and mailed.
6. Have students place cards in decorated envelopes. Collect cards from the students.
7. Send cards to the place you have chosen, or plan a field trip and have the kids hand out their cards.

**Other Ideas:**

1. Have students send the cards to their relatives. Be sure to have students bring an address and a first-class stamp on lesson day.
2. Send the cards to your pen pal class or "sister" classroom in another location.

## Cards for Kids

### Everyday Card Lesson Plan

**Objectives:** Learn how to sign a card and address an envelope. Understand how the post office collects and delivers mail.

**Preparation:** Have students bring in a first-class stamp and the address of a friend or relative that does not live in their household. Arrange to provide stamps for children from low-income families. Contact the local post office and arrange a tour (optional).

**Materials:** Cards and envelopes – blank cards and friendship titles; pencils, pens, crayons; *The Jolly Postman: Or Other People's Letters* by Janet Ahlberg and Allan Ahlberg.

**Time:** An afternoon with optional post office tour.

#### **Procedure:**

1. Read *The Jolly Postman: Or Other People's Letters* to the class.
2. Discuss letter writing with the class and review the letters in the book. What is a return address? Where is the receiver's address placed on the envelope?
3. Distribute the cards and envelopes to the students.
4. Have children write their address where the return address should appear, on the upper left-hand corner. Have the children address the envelope.
5. The children sign their cards.
6. Place stamp on envelope. Explain how the stamp pays for the letter to travel to the person who is on the envelope. A field trip to the post office could follow and would give the children a chance to see what becomes of the letters after they are mailed.
7. Go to the post office and mail cards and tour the post office -OR- explain how you will mail the cards and how the post office will deliver them to the student's card recipients.

#### **Other Ideas:**

1. Have the class send thank-you notes to classroom speakers, field trip chaperones, or to a place the class went on a field trip. Your donating company may have thank-you cards for this purpose.
2. Send "hello," "thinking of you," or other friendship titles to the classes' pen pals.

## Cards for Kids: Sample Press Release

(on your company letterhead)

For Immediate Release  
[date]

Contact: [name]  
[phone number]

### **[YOUR COMPANY NAME] HELPS LOCAL CHILDREN**

[Your city, state] -- Most [insert grade] students at [school name] will have a warm and wonderful Christmas with gifts from Santa and a big holiday dinner at home. But things will be a little different at the [name of family shelter/nursing home], and the students wanted to help less fortunate kids have a merrier Christmas.

[Number of students] students sent Christmas cards to children at the shelter, thanks to a donation of cards made by [your company name]. "We really enjoy our elementary school donation program," said [company representative]. "The children enjoy personalizing the cards, get an opportunity to help others who are less fortunate, and learn more about the joy of giving and receiving greeting cards." The donations were made as part of the "Cards for Kids" program organized by the Greeting Card Association in Washington, DC.

*[Insert comments from school representative and/or receiving organization]*

All elementary schools in the [your city] area are invited to contact [your company name] for information on the donation program. Both holiday and everyday cards are available, along with two fun lesson plans to help children learn about how the post office works, addressing and mailing envelopes, and helping others with the gift of greeting cards.

For more information, contact [name] at [phone number].

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