



When Kendall\*, an Eagle Village youth, slowly began to unwrap the first of her array of presents under the Christmas tree, the staff watching told her that she didn't have to go so slowly. That she could rip the paper away quickly to open her gift.

But when she looked up at them, she gave a response that none of them were expecting.

***“My mom fought just to keep the lights on in our house. We never had presents. I want to savor all of this.”***

Stories like this are not uncommon among our kids, and they never fail to stop us in our tracks. To hear what they have been through and see how they cherish the moments that may seem ordinary to us is always humbling beyond measure.

We know things are different this year. We know that things may not be living up to our expectations. But we also know, as our kids' stories so often remind us, that these moments are precious and that we are blessed in ways that seem unimaginable to others.

We wish you many blessings this Christmas!

\*Name changed to protect anonymity of our youth.



# It's a Wonderful Life

One of our core values at Eagle Village is uncovering pearls of great worth. Often our students do not feel valued when they arrive on campus. Having faced many obstacles, many of our kids have not always been cared for or kept safe by the ones who held that responsibility. Our staff work very hard to find the talents that many have buried deep inside them.

One of the most watched movies this time of year is *It's a Wonderful Life*. The movie's main character, George Bailey, has given up his hopes and dreams to help others. However, he begins to be deceived by the lies of the world and those around him, including the overbearing, negative Henry Potter. George starts to believe he'd be better off dead. Clarence, George's guardian angel, helps him to see what the world would have been like if George had not been born. After this eye-opening experience, George realizes his worth and the overwhelming blessings he has both received and been a part of in others'.

Over and over again, we get to see this lived out in the boys and girls at Eagle Village. In the movie, they say when you hear bells ringing, it means an angel has gotten its wings. When experiencing Christmas at Eagle Village, we believe bells would be ringing all over the place. As our kids experience the love and care of our staff, and begin to recognize the gifts and skills that they were created with, the light bulb goes off, and they can see that they can have – and do have – a Wonderful Life.

What are our kids looking forward to this holiday season?

Going into a new year with new opportunities. It's like getting a second chance every January.

Getting to be with my family during a happy time.

Eating good food. Hot Cheetos are my favorite.

Presents!

**From the EV staff:**

# Do-It-Yourself Gift Idea

## Custom Photo Coasters

### Supplies Needed

- 4x4 white ceramic tiles (Home Depot sells them for about 15 cents apiece!)
- Personal photos
- Metal file for smoothing edges
- Foam brush
- Scissors
- Mod Podge
- Cork sheet
- Water-based poly

Most of these you can buy from a craft store like Michael's or Hobby Lobby.

### Step 1

Cut your pictures down to size so they fit on top of the white tiles.

### Step 2

Apply a thin layer of Mod Podge to the top of each ceramic tile. Gently place a picture on top of the wet Mod Podge, making sure to smooth out any air bubbles. Once dry, apply a thin layer of Mod Podge to the top of the picture (don't worry, Mod Podge dries clear!)

### Step 3

When the top layer of Mod Podge is dry, apply 2 coats of poly to seal the picture. This will allow the coasters to keep water and other liquids from damaging the pictures.

### Step 4

Using the metal file, sand the edges of the tiles to smooth out any rough spots.

### Step 5

Trace the tiles onto the cork sheets, then cut out the cork. Some cork sheets come with adhesive on the back, otherwise you can glue them.

### Step 6

Stack and wrap the tiles in twine or ribbon for a pretty gift that is sure to put a smile on somebody's face!





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*Send a Holiday Greeting  
to One of Our Kids!*

Send your enveloped greeting to  
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