

PROMISING PRACTICES



HOPE Packs benefit recipients and assemblers alike

Throughout its more than 60 years of service, [Elim Christian Services'](#) mission has endured: "To equip individuals with disabilities with the tools to reach their full God-given potential." The Illinois provider emphasizes the value of clients serving others and integrating into the community.

In 2007, Elim teamed with other local nonprofit relief organizations and area churches to create HOPE Packs -- kits filled with school supplies, food, seeds, or other relief materials. HOPE Packs are distributed to impoverished children in the United States and worldwide through a partnering relief agency or church.

Through assembling HOPE Packs, adults with disabilities in Elim's services learn important vocational skills while earning a paycheck for their work.

Besides its obvious vocational benefits for adults who assemble the kits, the HOPE Packs program has been tremendously beneficial in the lives and outlooks of the adults served by Elim. Beth, a person served by Elim, says, "We like to help others. I think it is wonderful that we can help. I feel bad for the kids over there. I feel bad they don't have what they need to get an education. I am glad we can help them get what they need."

Bradley Johnson, Elim's director of adult services, adds, "In my more than 25 years of work with individuals with developmental disabilities, I have found their needs are the same as everyone's needs. They want to have purpose in their lives. Working and receiving a paycheck adds purpose to anyone's life, of course. However, when persons in services experience an opportunity to assemble kits with school supplies and

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About the ECS Promising Practices series

An organization receiving exemplary recognition in its CARF survey report stands out because of its professional and strategic response to a service or business need. CARF presents these ECS Promising Practices articles to encourage dialogue among service providers and to offer examples of creative solutions for improving service quality.

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Issues are categorized by topic -- Business Practices, Community Services, and Employment Services.

food to help underprivileged children, it is amazing to see how motivated and fulfilled they become."

Already, the HOPE Packs program has provided an estimated 120 hours of assembly work for each of the 180 adults Elim serves. Their efforts have produced more than 50,000 kits.

The HOPE Packs program has been an attractive marketing and fundraising opportunity for Elim Individual partners and foundations alike have stepped forward to support the program.

When Elim's most recent [CARF](#) survey report commended HOPE Packs, the organization's staff members were elated. Yet they remain more pleased to see the kits' effect on the persons served by the organization. Bradley explains, "Enthusiasm among our service participants continues to grow because they want to help more children through HOPE Packs. Several persons served were able to travel to Third World countries, see the poverty, and bring much needed help with our HOPE Packs. It was a life-changing experience for these individuals, and, for many, traveling overseas was a dream come true."

He continues, "While many persons with disabilities spend their lives as the recipients of others' good will, adults served at Elim have an opportunity to make a positive impact on the lives of others through the HOPE Packs program."

Elim staff members say they are proud of the HOPE Packs program and excited to see how it will continue to benefit Elim's adults and needy children in the future.

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