



TIMES LEADER STAFF PHOTOS/PETE G. WILCOX

Teacher Sally Pointek watches third-grader Erica Eck assemble a Jared Box at Dana Street Elementary in Forty Fort. The boxes are named after a Centre County child who died from brain cancer. The boy wondered why sick children didn't have toys to play with while waiting for treatment.

HOW TO MAKE A JARED BOX



Get a shoe box-sized plastic storage box.

Determine if your box will be for a boy or girl and the recipient's age.

Select items for your box. Suggestions include:

Children under 2 years old:
Bibs, rattles, soft books, teething rings, booties, pacifiers, sippy cups or bottles. (Don't include small toys that could cause choking.)

2-4 years old:
Matchbox cars, Play-Doh, crayons, coloring books, bubbles, card games, soft balls, paint sets, books, puppets, bendable figurines, costume jewelry or stuffed animals. (Don't include small toys that could cause choking.)

4-8 years old:
Silly Putty, Play-Doh, paints, books, art supplies, bubbles, card games, puzzles, travel-size board games, plastic animal figurines, cars, stuffed animals, stickers or Nerf balls.



Dana Elementary third-graders, from left, Richard Hylton, Melanie Gavlick and Ray Ercoloni pick out items to put in Jared Boxes.

8-11 years old:
Card games, paints, Silly Putty, calculator, silly string, gel pens, yo-yos, craft kits, brain-teasers, books, art supplies, travel-size games, word search, puzzles, small toys or Nerf balls.

11 and up:
Electronic games, word search/crossword puzzles, books,

playing cards, craft kits, brain-teasers, journals, art supplies, nail polish, stress balls or travel-size board games.

Contact the Jared Box Project to arrange delivery: the Jared Box Project, 129 Fenwick Drive, Port Matilda, PA 16870; thejaredbox@aol.com; (814) 353-9343; or www.thejaredbox.com.

Special delivery

Boxes keep cancer victim's memory, sentiment alive

By DOTTY MARTIN
For the Times Leader

FORTY FORT — Jared would be so proud.

Sally Pointek's third-graders at Dana Elementary Center have made 40 Jared Boxes and plan to deliver them to patients at Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center and Wilkes-Barre General Hospital.

A Jared Box is a plastic box filled with age- and gender-appropriate toys and games. The boxes are named after 6-year-old Jared McMullen of Centre County, who died after a 13-month battle against a malignant brain stem tumor. During his many treatments, tests and doctor's office visits, he carried a backpack filled with his favorite toys.

The toys helped him retain his sense of humor and made the waiting pass more quickly. Jared would often ask his mother, Ruth, why other sick children didn't have toys with them.

The Jared Box project was started by Cindy Kolarik of State College, a McMullen family friend, whose two children filled boxes at church. Since Jared's death in November 2000, thousands of Jared Boxes have been donated to help chronically ill or hospitalized children.

The project came to Forty Fort by way of Pointek's sister, the Rev. Nancy Kuhns of State College.

"I went to visit my sister in August and learned about the project," Pointek said. "And, because we have Rosina in this class, I thought this would be a great class project."

Pointek referred to Rosina Lopuhovsky, who was badly burned in a Swoyersville house fire during the summer.

"The first week she came back, there were all kinds of questions," Pointek said. "She was scared, but talked about her experience in the hospital."

To fund the project, Pointek asked students' parents to donate toys and money; students saved money and teachers held two dress-down days. Enough money was raised for Pointek's 19 students to fill 40 boxes.

Michael Yeninas and Kyle Gitkos had difficulty agreeing on what kind of stuffed animal to put in the box they were making, but finally decided on a penguin. Also in the box were cards, Play-Doh, a book and pencil.

Kyle knew that he and his classmates were making the boxes "for sick kids" and he knew that Jared was a "kid who died from sickness."

Laura Brown made a box for a girl that included a puzzle game and comb-and-mirror set.

"We want to make the children at the hospital happy," she said. "We hope they will play with the games when they get them."

Pointek, who watched over her charges like a proud parent, hopes some students will be present when the boxes are delivered to the hospitals.

"The whole point will be missed if they don't get to see kids receiving these boxes," she said.