

I am the adopted Social Worker for Walnut Hill in Bethel, CT. Since my involvement with this program, I have received school supplies, Easter baskets, Thanksgiving baskets, beds, furniture, clothing, funding for summer camps, Heeley sneakers for a child placed in the Danbury Safe Home, and many other necessary supplies to help our families. I am an Investigator in the Danbury DCF office and often use this program during my investigations when needs have been identified. If I go into a home and find that the children do not have their own beds, I will make a request to my liaison at the church. In my experience, it takes the church less time to respond and meet my client's needs than it takes DCF to pay a provider or "cut" a check. Without this service, 18 families that I requested Thanksgiving baskets for this year would probably end up eating at McDonalds instead of enjoying a nutritious meal provided by Walnut Hill. I am in the process of submitting my Christmas lists to ensure that several children don't go without presents this year, including some special requests made by foster children. I have a great relationship with my church liaisons and with my coordinator, Meral. They respect our confidentiality issues and do not press for more information. I would be at a loss without Walnut Hill.

Sincerely,

Shelly Smith-Winters
DCF Investigations Unit