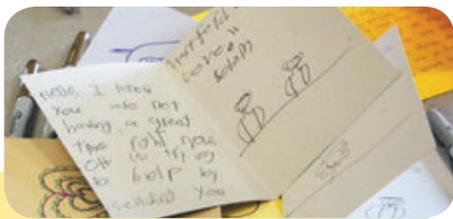


# Sharing Love and Hope

Have you ever learned about a problem in the world and wished you could do something about it? Fourth-grader Tiernan C. did, and he turned his wish into a service project.

Tiernan, a Bahá'í who lives in Connecticut, U.S., started Hartford Bags of Love to provide homeless people with needed items. With positive goals and a nine-year-old founder, the project attracted attention. U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal wrote to Tiernan, "You are not only providing those in need with clothing and toiletries, but you are also giving them hope for a better tomorrow."

Brilliant Star interviewed Tiernan to learn more about his project. His experience shows how one inspired person can make a difference with service.



Tiernan and friends put encouraging notes in the bags.

## Q: What inspired you to launch Hartford Bags of Love?

A: My parents were taking me to Bushnell Park in Hartford . . . [to help serve] food for the homeless



Tiernan C. (front row, in red shirt), his mom Renu, his brother Aakhil, and others gather to assemble "Bags of Love."

... There's this one homeless man I was talking to . . . about what his life is like, and it was kind of emotional for me. So I talked to my parents, and we started Hartford Bags of Love . . . It started out as a small thing. Then people started getting interested and . . . then we got on the news, so it's grown a lot.

## Q: How did you decide what to include in the bags?

A: We thought that [we] could try to make their life better by at least starting [with] some stuff that they might want to eat, like granola bars or bottles of water . . . We gave out bags full of stuff . . . like [a] toothbrush, toothpaste, mouthwash . . . And then we started getting donations from . . . the town . . .

## Q: What do you write on the notes that you put in the bags?

A: Inspirational messages, like "never give up" — just stuff that might make them feel a little bit better about their lives . . .

## Q: What advice do you have for somebody who is thinking of starting a service project?

A: Try to think about what would be the most helpful . . . [If you] want to do something that might not be possible, try something smaller at the beginning, then . . . work up to that.



## Q: What virtues are important to have when you're doing a service project like this?

A: Kindness, because [you] can be kind to [people] when you're talking to them. And also love, because Hartford Bags of Love is about helping [people] and sharing their love.

Go to [www.brilliantstarmagazine.org/articles/sharing-love-and-hope](http://www.brilliantstarmagazine.org/articles/sharing-love-and-hope) for more photos and the extended interview with Tiernan.