

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Joy Johnson and I am an Early Childhood Specialist with Simpson Housing Services. Simpson provides supportive housing for families coming out of homelessness in Minneapolis and the surrounding areas. Within the Family Housing Program at Simpson, I do parent education and home visiting in hopes to ensure school readiness and stop the cycle of poverty and generational homelessness.

I reached out to Danielle Selassie at Babies Need Boxes in December 2015 after seeing an article in Star Tribune featuring the organization. At the time, I was working with a young mother who was looking for a crib for her child that was due in the next few weeks. Cribs and other furniture that promotes a safe sleep environment is difficult to come by. Due to the high rate of recalls with cribs, our organization tends to discourage donations of that type and the families that we work with are not able to afford to purchase a crib on their own. Danielle came out and met with Simpson employees, bringing along a Baby Box for the mother in need. After speaking, Danielle agreed to supply Baby Boxes to the mothers welcoming new babies within the Simpson Housing Programs.

Even though we have only been partnering for four months, Babies Need Boxes has already made a huge impact on our families! Approximately 15 mothers have received boxes so far and the referrals continue to come in. The Baby Box is such a big resource for the families that we work with. While welcoming a new baby should be a joyous occasion, many of our families are under a great deal of stress. They are dealing with poverty, housing instability, some mental health barriers, and many other things. What we have found is that the Baby Box supplies our families with many of the items needed in order to be prepared to welcome a new baby. Without having to worry about where their baby is going to sleep and if they will be able to afford all the necessary baby supplies, our mothers are able to settle into their pregnancy and allow themselves to become mentally prepared for parenthood. I have had the pleasure of delivering several of the boxes and I cannot even describe the joy on the parents' faces. We feel so fortunate to be able to partner with Babies Need Boxes and offer our families this great resource! This is such an important organization doing great work within our community!

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