

“Today, 20,227 children in New Hampshire will go to bed hungry. As youth we asked ourselves, ‘what could we do that would affect the community in a positive way?’ We finally came up with the idea of collecting pennies.”

—Kristina Harrold, youth organizer,  
FBC’s Penny Project

Most Christians see the negative consequences of poverty and want to do something about it in response to their faith.

### What Can You Do?

By collecting not only pennies, but all sorts of coins—nickels, dimes, quarters, and silver and gold dollars—you can raise more money to help families with children in your local community. And, together, we can reach the national goal.

### Make it Happen

- Place coin jugs in strategic positions throughout your church
- Collect coins as a family
- Invite your schools and community organizations to participate
- Promote the program in local newspapers
- Collect coins in a conspicuous location to help people visualize the number of children in your community or state struggling to live in environments of poverty.

For more ideas or to share yours, visit  
[www.nationalministries.org/CIP](http://www.nationalministries.org/CIP)

**Office of Children in Poverty**  
National Ministries, American Baptist Churches USA  
1.800.222.3872, ext. 2158

**Give the change,  
but also be the Change!**

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# THE Penny PROJECT

The Children in Poverty Initiative  
National Ministries ABCUSA



Raising  
awareness

Raising  
change for Change

Raising  
**14 million pennies**  
to represent the number of children  
living in poverty  
in the United States and Puerto Rico

**THE Penny PROJECT**

Raising awareness of and creating change for children in poverty



# THE Penny PROJECT

The Children in Poverty Initiative  
National Ministries ABCUSA

A four-person family earning less than \$22,050 a year sets the poverty standard. Based on that “definition,” at least 14 million children, newborn to age 18, live in poverty in the United States and Puerto Rico.

Double a family’s annual income to \$44,100—which still qualifies as low income, or 200% of poverty level—and the number of children living in low-income situations grows to more than 28 million.

**Members of low-income families often struggle with a variety of negative consequences, depending on the presence or absence of extended family and community support:**

- Inadequate health and dental care
- Limited access to transportation
- Low-quality education
- Low self-esteem
- Hunger
- Homelessness
- Frequent moves
- Isolation
- Illiteracy
- Domestic violence



## Youth Lead a Response

The youth of First Baptist Church (FBC) in New London, N.H., are calling the youth of American Baptist Churches USA to raise both money and awareness for children in poverty nationwide.

In 2008, when FBC youth learned that 60,000 children were living in poverty in their state, they



wanted to visualize that number. They decided to collect a penny to represent each child, so FBC youth canvassed the community, asking for pennies from church members, schools, and nearby neighborhoods. Within six months, they amassed 60,000 pennies!

Before donating the money to local food pantries, homeless shelters, and other organizations, they raised awareness by taking the pennies to the state house, where they met with the governor and state representatives.

Now FBC youth implore you to join their efforts to raise at least 14 million pennies by April 2010 to represent the number of children living in poverty in the United States and Puerto Rico.



Poverty is pervasive in rural, urban, and suburban communities. If poverty is invisible in your community, look on the other side of town. No one is geographically far removed from poverty.

## Hope for The Penny Project

This project is about more than doing something for someone. This project is about walking



with people in poverty. It’s more than a handout. It’s holding hands with our neighbors and friends.

### The Penny Project provides:

- **Education** about the issue.
- **Reflection** about personal faith and how it calls individuals to care for each other.
- **Inspiration** that little gifts as small as pennies, when brought together, can lead to great change.
- **Connection** with a local ministry effectively addressing issues of hunger, homelessness, illiteracy, and isolation among children.
- **Association** with legislators in your city, county, state, and nation to advocate for more compassionate policies for families in need.

### As you collect pennies and other coins, FBC youth ask you to:

- Share with your congregation what you have learned about the children in your community, state, or region who experience hunger, homelessness, isolation, or illiteracy, and lift those concerns in prayer.
- Contact legislators in your community, county, or state to find out how they plan to address the issue of children living in poverty.
- Choose to support a program or ministry that is responding to hunger, homelessness, isolation, or illiteracy issues affecting children in your town or one nearby.
- Go to National Ministries’ Web site at [www.nationalministries.org/CIP/](http://www.nationalministries.org/CIP/) to report the total amount raised, see how others are responding to the challenge, and share stories about ways the challenge is making a difference for you, your church, and your community.