

Beads of Courage and Memory Boxes Project

Last year one of the most fulfilling events I was ever a part of was when the QCWT's made over 40 Beads of Courage boxes for kids with childhood cancer and delivered them to Cadence Health Hospital in Winfield, IL. I felt like we really changed someone's life; just for a minute.

I know some of you are thinking, what good is forty boxes to the thousands of kids with cancer... I know most of you have heard this story, but it bears repeating: A boy was walking along the beach when he saw a man tossing turtles into the ocean before the seagulls could carry them away. The boy asked the man, "What are you doing?" The man said, "I am saving this turtle by helping him into the ocean before he is eaten by the seagulls." "But," said the boy, "there are thousands of birds helping themselves to the turtles up and down the beach. How can you make a difference?" The man said, "I make a difference to this one and this one and..."

And, so I think we too can make a difference for that young boy or girl and family so pre-maturely robbed of a young life. This year we would like to do our part too in helping where we can by making Beads of Courage Boxes like last year. You can help by purchasing materials or a cash donation if you physically can not help out.

Here are your general guide-lines so they have time to dry and don't warp or crack. If you choose to wet turn, then let dry out ! They can be any wood, turned to at least a 6 inch, but preferred 8 inch inside diameter by 6 inch but preferred 8 inside height. The thickness doesn't have to be super thin, but keep in mind these kids probably don't have a lot of strength for lifting heavy objects, so keep that in mind.

These kids are real sensitive to odors, etc. so make sure any finish or paint has plenty of time to dry as not to be an issue. Keep the tops open to air inside out (I'm guessing 2-3 weeks). These guidelines would apply to the memory boxes, as well.

Dave and Steve Johnson are putting together a plan for you to produce multiple Memory boxes, if you wanted to, which would be for the

families of these kids. They would be like a basic jewelry box. Big enough for a 8 and a half by eleven sheet of paper and probably 3-4 inches high. We will give you a more detailed plan in the near future or you can come up with your own. Perhaps, show more examples and talk building ideas at the March meeting. One can google Memory Boxes or Keepsake Boxes to see additional examples and ideas.

My plan is to have several group leaders in the various communities who have the necessary tools, equipment, space, and wood hold work days where small groups can get together and build these. The camaraderie of working with friends, would be a lot of fun.

You're welcome attend one group and then start your own group in your area. Also, I know there is probable a million ways to make a box with lap, miter, spline, or other joints. It doesn't matter, but please reinforce your corners for strength. I'm guessing this is going to be a very important heirloom for "one family's life", so go on and make a difference.

See Dan Gascoigne, Dave Johnson, Steve Johnson, Steve Shippey, Warren Hadley or myself if you have any questions or would like to become a leader, worker bee or donate monetarily.

tom boerjan