



Be a #BirthdayHero and  
gift your day to Playtime

Because play  
helps children *rise*





# Gift Your Birthday for Play!

During the 2018-19 school year, 7,728 students in Washington, D.C., experienced homelessness. And that's just the number of children enrolled in school – it doesn't include infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. That's almost 8,000 children without a home of their own to have friends sleep over, to mark the wall with their height as they grow, or to celebrate a birthday.

But your birthday can be a moment to raise awareness about homelessness in the District, while also raising money to bring play and other services that support resilience to children and families in shelters. It's a wonderful opportunity for kids and adults to make an impact on some of our community's most vulnerable youth.

## Here's What To Do...

1. Pledge your birthday or have your child pledge their special day.
2. Invite your friends and family to a virtual and/or real-life birthday event. Ask them to make a donation in lieu of a gift. For children's parties, you can ask for a new toy and/or donation.
3. Thank your guests for giving the Gift of Play to children living in family shelters.

https://gift-birthday-to-play.causevox.com/melanie-hatter

HOME SEARCH LOGIN

**Gift Your Birthday for Play!**

**Melanie Hatter**  
FUNDRAISER  
@melanie-hatter

My Appeal 0 Updates 1 Donors

**\$3**  
OF \$500 RAISED

**1**  
DONORS

**0 DAYS**  
REMAINING

**DONATE**

**SHARE**

**Thank you for joining me in supporting play for my birthday!**

Each year, over 2,000 children in our nation's capital are housed in temporary family shelters. This is over 2,000 missed chances for birthday parties with friends. But with your help we can make a difference. Your gift to my birthday campaign helps bring play to some of the most vulnerable children in Washington, DC. Your gift in support of play:

- Helps host birthday parties for children living in shelter;
- Provides opportunities for field trips to sites such as the Baltimore Aquarium or National Air & Space Museum;
- Connects children with over 200 caring and committed volunteers who make a weekly commitment to visit our playrooms;
- Makes over 6,000 visits to our playrooms happen each year!

Thank you for being a hero of play with me!



# Setting Up Your Personal Fundraising Page

1. Visit <https://gift-birthday-to-play.causevox.com/> and click the "PLEDGE YOUR BIRTHDAY" box to get started.
2. If you are a first-time user to CauseVox, create an account by providing your name and email address and creating a password.
3. Complete your profile by uploading a picture of yourself and adding your first and last name again (or, the name of your child). You can also share the month and day of your birthday with Playtime (this information is not visible to the public).
4. Create a fundraising goal. Be sure to set a goal that is ambitious, but also attainable! Set an end date to help supporters know the deadline for making a gift.
5. Next, write your appeal! We've gone ahead and started this part for you already. Feel free to use all, some, or none of the text we have provided below. Pro Tip: Make it personal. Sharing your connection to Playtime and why you want to donate your birthday will help encourage friends and family to make a gift. When finished, click "Save and Continue."
6. Almost finished! This last page will allow you to share your fundraising page through email or social media networks. If you're not ready to share right away, you can always come back to this later. When finished, click "All Done" and you're ready to go.
7. Your dashboard allows you to manage your campaign. Here you can see who has donated, share automatically through social networks, edit the text and photos on your page, create campaign updates, and edit personal account information.
8. After setting up your page, now is the time to share it. On the next page you will find sample messages to use on Facebook and Twitter. After your campaign is finished, proudly display your certificate on social media for being a #BirthdayHero. When your campaign is over, Playtime will send your donors a thank you letter, but it would be great for you to express your thanks as well - to help we've included a small card in this packet that you can print and personalize to express your gratitude.

If you have any questions or need technical support in setting up your page, please contact us at 202-329-4481 or [development@playtimeproject.org](mailto:development@playtimeproject.org).




# Talking With Children About Homelessness

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education reported that 7,728 students in the District were experiencing homelessness during the 2018-2019 school year, so it is likely that your child may have a classmate living in temporary shelter. Your son or daughter may have also seen single adults without a home on the streets of D.C. and didn't know that children are living in similar situations. It is important to answer children's questions honestly and with the appropriate amount of information for their age level; a four-year-old will need a much simpler explanation than a 13-year-old.

There are many reasons families become homeless, and it is erroneous to label all families who are homeless in a negative way. It's important to be mindful not to project negative attitudes when talking about families experiencing homelessness. Your child will pick up on cues you may unknowingly give and take that as a directive on how to approach and think about these children and their families. Also, be mindful not to use this conversation as an opportunity to scare children into staying in school, not using drugs or alcohol, etc.

To get started, below are some talking points geared towards younger children:

- Our family is fortunate to have our own home. You have your own bedroom and space to play. But did you know, there are children your age who don't have their own rooms or spaces to play?
- Throughout the city we see different types of homes. We see houses, big and small, and apartment buildings. Families have to pay money to live in these different types of homes. Families who don't have enough money to live in one of these homes often live in a place called a shelter.
- Sharing and helping others is important. Sadly, many families do not have a home like we do, and live in shelters where their whole family lives, sleeps, and plays together in one room. But we can share what we have.
- Gifting your birthday to Playtime will help kids living in shelter have the chance to play safely where they live, enjoy yummy snacks, go on fun field trips, and have birthday parties with snacks and presents.



*For additional resources on raising a socially responsible child, visit Bright Horizons Foundation at [www.brightspaces.org](http://www.brightspaces.org).*

# Sharing Playtime's Message

A crucial part of the success of your campaign relies on sharing Playtime's story and why it's important to you. To help you share Playtime's mission and programs, below are some messaging points to share on social media and in emails.

The Gift Your Birthday for Play campaign is a way for adults and children to pledge their birthdays to support children living in temporary housing shelters.

Every gift benefits the Homeless Children's Playtime Project, a D.C.-based organization that provides safe and fun play experiences for children living in family shelters.

Last year, there were more than 7,000 visits to Playtime's playrooms – that's over 7,000 opportunities for children experiencing homelessness to connect with a caring adult, enjoy a nutritious snack, take healthy risks, build resiliency, and develop new friendships.

Visit [www.playtimeproject.org](http://www.playtimeproject.org) to learn more about the power of play!

Playtime helps children rise. That's why I'm pledging my birthday to @projectplaytime this year!

I pledged my birthday so children in temporary housing have a safe place to play! #BirthdayHero

I want to make my birthday count this year by making a difference in the lives of children experiencing homelessness. I hope all my Facebook friends will support my pledge and give the gift of play! #BirthdayHero

*Pro Tip: Sharing your campaign on social media will help spread the word about your campaign.*

*Providing updates on your progress will also make donors more likely to give, as it makes you look invested in your campaign, too.*





Thank you for giving  
the gift of play!



1525 Newton Street NW, Washington, DC 20010  
www.playtimeproject.org

The mission of the Homeless Children's Playtime Project is to cultivate resilience in children experiencing family homelessness by providing and expanding access to transformative play experiences. We do this by: Creating ongoing play opportunities that nurture healthy child development; Challenging systemic injustice by advocating for policies and practices that reduce the risk of chronic homelessness; Connecting families with critical support services and supplies in the community to meet their concrete needs.

## NOISSIM

Dear

Thank you for supporting my commitment to provide youth experiencing homelessness with safe spaces to play and other much-needed services. Your gift truly makes a difference in the lives of so many children here in our nation's capital.

P.S. I encourage you to be a  
#BirthdayHero, too!

is a #BirthdayHero

This year I'm pledging my birthday to the  
Homeless Children's Playtime Project because  
*Playtime helps children rise.*



Signature

Birthday (Day/Month)

