

Wildfire Press
New Haven, CT.
203.772.2032/thomaselane@sbcglobal.net

To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to introduce you to a fund-raising project to aid the hungry and the homeless. It is based on a donation from my family and requires little effort and no expense on your part.

Background

In the mid-nineties, acclaimed author Helen Hudson (see attached kudos) worked as a volunteer for soup kitchens in New Haven, Connecticut. After years of interaction and extensive interviews with the "Guests," she wrote a book documenting her experiences. It was called, **Dinner at Six: voices from the soup kitchen**. Although her presence as a writer is apparent, the book is largely the raw words and honest, unpadding stories of those who live below the radar screen...the forgotten world of the homeless.

Feeling that the book could do the most good as a fund-raising vehicle, Ms. Hudson and family decided to publish the manuscript themselves and donate copies to organizations that serve the homeless and the hungry. Their purpose was two-fold: 1) To use the books as a fundraising tool with all proceeds from book sales going to their own out-reach programs. 2) to use **Dinner at Six** as a vehicle to raise awareness and sensitize the public to this problem by "putting a face on the issue."

In the spirit of help, it was decided to keep the book on a donation basis, with no set price. This allowed the purchaser to give any amount he/she desired. The donations have ranged from \$5-\$500, with an average between \$15-20 per copy. Since the books cost us approximately \$4.00 per copy to print, the return on investment for the needy is tremendous.

Launched in May of 2002, the program has been fantastically successful on both fronts. Some of the accomplishments to date include:

- * The soup kitchen of St. Paul/St. James has raised over \$2500 through book sales.
- * The Community Soup Kitchen has raised over \$4,600 through book sales. They have also kindly put us under their 501C3 so that money pledged to print the books can be written off as a tax deduction.
- * Unverified, there are reports that numerous people have volunteered their time to work at soup kitchens after reading the book.
- * The project has spread to other organizations in New Jersey, New York, Texas and California

* In Maine, the Coalition to End Homelessness in Maine, has distributed books to its 40 shelters throughout the state.

* Two colleges (Colby in Maine and Saint Joseph's in Connecticut) have used **Dinner at Six** as a textbook in their sociology department.

* The book has been sent to congressmen, senators and governors to alert them to the plight of the homeless.

* The book has sold out at two Barnes and Noble stores in the New Haven area (the money going to Community Soup Kitchen and St. Paul/St. James).

* The project has received media attention (TV, radio, press) in New Haven and elsewhere (see attached).

Our Proposal

The **Dinner at Six** project is a response to a universal need - hunger and homelessness. There is no cost to participate in this program. Any group dedicated to this area is welcome to books as long as our supply holds out.

Inside every copy is the announcement "Your purchase donation will go to _____, below which is a box for each group's identifying label or stamp.

All we ask from participants of the Dinner at Six Program are:

* An awareness that the books cost us money and therefore be used for the above stated purpose.

* A receipt of the specific number of books you receive from us; signed and dated on your organization's letterhead (for tax purposes).

* A willingness to keep us informed about the books: a) the number of books sold, b) the income derived from book sales.

* Your ideas and observations about the successfulness of the project.

* Referrals to other relevant organizations that might be interested or helpful to this project.

If you would like to participate in this donation or have questions, please contact us at: thomaselane@sbcglobal.net or 203-772-2032.

We look forward to hearing from you,

Thomas Lane/Wildfire Press