

## JCP GIFT CARDS HELP THREE LITTLE BOYS WITH ONE BIG IDEA HELP OTHERS

When three young boys at Amber Terrace Elementary School in DeSoto, Texas, noticed that some of their classmates were unable to purchase new school uniforms, or came to class with badly worn shoes, they decided to do something about it. What they did captured the attention and the support of their school, their community, a major charity, the local JCPenney store and JCP Incentive Sales. The result was \$15,000 in JCPenney gift cards that were used to purchase new shoes and clothing for more than 350 classmates.

In the beginning the youngsters, Sean Robinson, 9, his brother John Robinson IV, 11, and friend Raul Hinojos, 9, decided to pool their allowances to buy clothing for classmates in need. They soon realized that the need was greater than their combined savings, so they organized a talent show to raise more funds. The show had the full backing of the school's administration, and the boys were given whatever was required to support the show's success. And successful it was: the event raised enough money to assist 35 children.

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But there was more to come. Sean and John's mother, Cynthia Robinson, was so inspired that she wrote a letter to Pat and Emmitt Smith Charities (PESC), requesting additional funds to clothe more children in need. Pat and Emmitt Smith Charities, a nonprofit created by the Dallas Cowboys legend



Emmitt and Pat Smith with Sean Robinson, John Robinson IV, and Raul Hinojos. Photo Credit: James Edward Photography.

and his wife, Pat, to fund educational opportunities for underserved children.

The request resonated with Smith, who was quoted in local media as responding, "...Hey, we can help you reach more than 35... we can reach 300 kids..." To make it happen, Pat and Emmitt Smith Charities decided to partner with JCPenney, which had made an unrestricted donation of \$15,000 to the charity. With the assistance of JCP Incentive Sales, the charity was able to use the money to purchase JCPenney gift cards at a discount, enabling the charity to make their gift go even further.

The charity also reached out to Amber Terrace Elementary School principal, Angela Williams, to see what she thought of Smith and his wife coming to the school to give out the gift cards.

"She was ecstatic about us coming," said Ronelle lanace, vice president/community relations for Emmitt Smith Enterprises. "We called the mother who had sent the letter and she couldn't believe that this is what they were going to get out of it."

On August 10, 2013, hundreds of Amber Terrace Elementary School children and their parents lined



Amber Terrace Elementary Grant Distribution Event 2013. Photo Credit: James Edward Photography.

up at the school to receive their gift cards and meet the legendary football player and his wife. It was a major event, drawing more than 1,000 attendees, including the mayor of DeSoto, city council members, the superintendent of schools, the chamber of commerce and a state representative and news crews.

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**Ronelle Ianace, vice president/community relations for Emmitt Smith Enterprises.**

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In addition to the thrill of seeing how their idea grew to help so many, Sean, John, Raul and their school friends listened to Pat and Emmitt Smith as they spoke of the importance of having a dream and caring for neighbors, friends and community. Leslie Boysen, director of programs for Pat and Emmitt Smith Charities, PESC noted, “These boys

had a dream of helping 35 additional students, and as a result, were able to reach over 300 students at the school.”

“JCPenney enabled an idea that Emmitt had to come to life, and for that partnership, we are so grateful,” said Ianace. “Emmitt didn’t think about JCPenney as someone who wrote us a check. He thought of them as a retailer and what they are so good at. So (using the donation to buy the gift cards) was our way of being able to return it back to JCPenney. It’s an exchange—a circle—and we really appreciate JCPenney for that.”

**ABOUT PAT & EMMITT SMITH CHARITIES:** Pat & Emmitt Smith Charities (PESC) is a public charity that creates and funds unique educational experiences and enrichment opportunities for underserved children. Focusing primarily in North Texas, PESC’s TEAM 22 program partners with established organizations to provide a multi-year curriculum for underserved students, accessing and funding opportunities such as a summer camp, tutoring and leadership training. In addition, PESC funds existing children’s programs in North Texas through its annual grant application process.