The Elves Program Frequently Asked Questions

Visit our website for more information about the program and how to get involved, http://elves.cornell.edu

Who Are The Elves?
Caring people from across the Cornell community and beyond. Anyone can participate.

How Does The Program Work?
**Winter Holiday Program:** Nurses and social workers at area elementary schools identify the children who are in greatest need. Using our Profile Sheets they provide information on each boy and girl to Elf Leaders - see samples of the forms and the list of leaders on our website. Leaders then distribute the profiles to individuals, families, or groups who want to sponsor a child. Sponsors (Elves) purchase items and wrap the gifts, making sure that each child receives every item on a checklist: socks, underwear, a new outfit, pajamas, a hat & gloves, and a toy (all gifts are new). Elf leaders deliver the bags of gifts to the school where they are picked up by parents or delivered to the homes. The anonymity of the children and their parents is always protected.

**Summer Backpack Program:** Needy children are identified by our school contacts. Elves purchase new backpacks and use our checklist to purchase the school supplies that go into the backpacks.

How Can I Arrange To Sponsor A Child?
Contact any of the Elf Leaders, see the list on our website. You can pick a leader associated with a particular school if you wish, or use the general contact. They can provide you with the profile sheet for a boy or girl. You can download the Shopping Checklist and Shopping Guidelines from the Forms section of this site.

What Does It Cost To Sponsor A Child?
$125. We try to buy quality clothing since these kids usually have so little and wear their new outfits frequently.

Is The Program Associated With A Particular Holiday?
No, we sponsor kids regardless of the winter holiday observed in their homes.

How Can I Make A Donation?
Every penny donated to our program goes to help a truly needy girl or boy in one of our area schools. It costs approximately $125 to sponsor a child for the Winter Holiday Program and $25 to purchase a new backpack with school supplies for our Summer Backpack Program. There are two ways to donate:
1) Contribute directly to one of our Elf Leaders, see the list on our website. This is probably best for people who work on the Cornell campus. Each of our schools has one or more leaders Cash is great and saves us time. Checks are fine too and should be made payable to 'The Elves'.
2) Send a check, made payable to "The Elves", to Bill Alberta, 751 Elm Street, Ithaca, NY 14850. Bill will cash the check and bring the money to the Elf Leader of your choice.

How Did It Start?
The main program was started in 1989 by Bill Alberta as an alternative to the December gift exchange in the Cornell office where he worked. Instead of buying each other five-dollar gifts, people pooled their money and purchased new clothing and toys for five needy children at Enfield Elementary School. The program blossomed from there. Today, hundreds of "Elves" help more than 1,000 children from 33 area schools each holiday season."