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For Immediate Release

The spare change movement that's changing lives

How a growing holiday tradition is offering hope for needy families around the world this Christmas, while sparking a new spirit of giving in others

In an economy where the upcoming holiday season appears that for many, it will be less than “merry and bright” and more people than ever will likely need some form of charitable assistance, a rapidly spreading Christmas tradition is bringing hope to thousands around the globe.

The Christmas Jars movement, begun in 2005, is aptly named after the *New York Times* bestseller *Christmas Jars*. With nearly a half-million copies in circulation, readers have adopted the tradition memorialized in the fictional tale—to fill a jar with spare change and then give it anonymously to someone in need at Christmas. The tradition lives on in author Jason Wright’s newest book, *Christmas Jars Reunion* (Shadow Mountain Publishing, Oct. 2009, ISBN: 978-1-60641-165-0, Hardcover, \$17.95).

What began as an experiment by the author’s family has now turned into a national “pay it forward” movement of giving. Hundreds of readers have emailed Wright, sharing their experiences of giving jars; he also has received many touching accounts from those receiving jars. “This small action has the potential to heal families, teach people how to give again, and show those who need help that they are remembered,” Wright said.

While there is no way of knowing just how extensive the ‘Christmas Jars’ movement has become, (the idea is to give a jar anonymously), Wright divulges that he’s aware of communities in 39 states across the country where jars are being given. He has also heard from individuals in Canada, England, Taiwan, Ukraine, and Italy.

Christmas Jars Reunion follows the story of Hope Jensen and her goal to place 1,001 jars of spare change with families in need. Among others helping her reach her goal is Clark Maxwell, a potential love interest, where romance has never been Hope’s strong suit. As Christmas day draws near, Hope learns the most important lesson of the Christmas Jar – that giving is really all about the “one.”

Wright is also trying to teach children to start the giving tradition early in life with his new children’s picture book, *Penny’s Christmas Jar Miracle* (Shadow Mountain Publishing, Oct. 2009, ISBN: 978-1-60641-167-4, Hardcover, \$17.95). Featuring beautiful illustrations by Ben Sowards, *Penny’s Christmas Jar Miracle* tells the story of a little girl whose Christmas Jar blesses an entire neighborhood.

For more information about this movement, to read real-life accounts of Christmas Jars, and to learn more about author Jason Wright, visit ChristmasJars.com.

Christmas Jars Reunion is available in bookstores and online October 1.

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About the Author

Jason Wright is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Christmas Jars* and *The Wednesday Letters*. He’s also a political commentator whose editorials have appeared in newspapers nationwide. Jason has appeared on FoxNews, CNN, and on dozens of local and national radio shows. He is the founding editor of PoliticalDerby.com. He lives with his wife, Kodi, and their four children in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

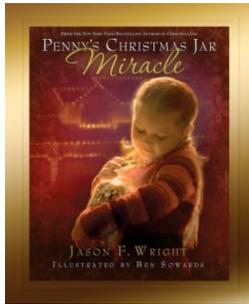


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For Immediate Release

Penny's Christmas Jar Miracle

Teaching children to give, one jar at a time



During the busy holiday season, the true meaning of Christmas often gets lost in the shuffle. *New York Times* bestselling author Jason Wright is teaching children to start the giving tradition early in life with his new children's picture book, *Penny's Christmas Jar Miracle* (Shadow Mountain Publishing, Oct. 2009, ISBN: 978-1-60641-167-4, Hardcover, \$17.95).

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In *Penny's Christmas Jar Miracle*, this year Penny Paisley gets to choose what to do with the family Christmas Jar, and she has something special in mind. “Instead of just giving our jar to only one person and one family, what if we gave it to the entire neighborhood?” Penny said. “We could use the Christmas Jar money to have the biggest and best party anyone has ever been to. No one will ever forget it!”

To earn money for the Christmas Jar, Penny sets up a hot chocolate stand in front of her house. Mr. Charlie, the kind elderly man across the street, is her best customer. He even helps her make invitations for the party. But when Mr. Charlie becomes ill, Penny sets a new plan in motion and gets the whole neighborhood involved. Yes, this will be a Christmas and a party that no one will ever forget!

In *Penny's Christmas Jar Miracle*, children will not only learn about compassion and service but, most important, they'll see that no matter what your age, you can make a difference in the life of someone else.

For more information about this movement, to read real-life accounts of Christmas Jars, and to learn more about author Jason Wright, visit ChristmasJars.com.

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CHRISTMAS JARS

The Christmas Jars movement is now in 39 states, and 6 countries outside the U.S.

ALABAMA

Anniston

ARIZONA

Tuscon
Prescott Valley
Goodyear
Mesa
Tempe
Peoria

CALIFORNIA

Fallbrook
Modesto
El Dorado Hills
North Highlands
Riverside
Fontana
Antioch
Hayward
Chico

COLORADO

Colorado Springs
Grand Junction

CONNECTICUT

(community unknown)

FLORIDA

Miami
Key Biscayne
Palm City
Clermont
Niceville

GEORGIA

Canton
Marietta
Smyrna
Ludowici
Macon

HAWAII

Pearl City

IDAHO

Boise
Declo
Idaho Falls

ILLINOIS

St. Charles
Crystal Lake

INDIANA

Indianapolis
Westfield
Carmel
Noblesville
Fishers
Tipton
Danville
Lawrence
Fort Wayne
Zionsville
Columbus
Beech Grove
Huntington
Indianapolis

IOWA

West Des Moines
Mount Pleasant

KENTUCKY

Lexington
Lakeside Park
Owensboro
Florence
Hopkinsville

LOUISIANA

Metairie

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

MICHIGAN

Rochester Hills
Hamilton
Rockford
Niles
Comstock Park
Grosse Pointe Park
Warren
Romeo

MINNESOTA

Goodhue
St. Paul

MONTANA

Bozeman
Billings

MISSOURI

Pierce City
Jackson
Wentzville
Slater

NEBRASKA

Lincoln

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Rindge
Dover

NEW JERSEY

Jackson
West Deptford
Parlin
Berlin

NEW YORK

Rochester
Newark
Scottsville
Hamburg
Deer Park
Phoenicia
New Hartford

NORTH CAROLINA

Holly Springs
Cornelius
Willow Spring
Bear Creek
Mount Airy
West Jefferson

NEVADA

Henderson

(see opposite side for more)

CHRISTMAS JARS

The Christmas Jars movement is now in 39 states, and 6 countries outside the U.S.

OHIO

Dayton
Cleveland
Marysville
Lakewood
Cincinnati
Ashland
Beavercreek
Broadview Heights
Centerville
Kettering
Loveland
Bellevue
Rocky River
Monroe
Liberty Township
Warren
Bryan
Lancaster
Mentor
Conneaut
Toledo
Massillon
Galloway

OKLAHOMA

Coleman
Lawton

OREGON

Baker City
Adrian
Bend
Umatilla

PENNSYLVANIA

Reading
Pittsburgh
Fairview
Shiremanstown
Carlisle
Harrisburg

RHODE ISLAND

East Providence

SOUTH CAROLINA

Charleston
Lexington

TENNESSEE

Dickson
Tullahoma
Maryville
Elizabethton

TEXAS

Rockwall
Gladewater
Sugar Land
Katy
Plano
Pasadena
Round Rock
Fort Worth
Vidor

UTAH

Tooele
Layton
Salt Lake City
Brigham City
West Jordan
Provo
Garland
Hyrum
Santa Clara
Spanish Fork
Herriman
St. George
South Jordan
Bountiful
Farmington
Draper
American Fork

VIRGINIA

Blacksburg
Woodstock
Fairfax
Richmond
Centreville
Strasburg
Mount Jackson
Toms Brook
Stephens City
Timberville
Scottsville
Maurertown

WASHINGTON

Kennewick
Wintrop
Bremerton
Kirkland
Everett
Olympia
Kent
Kirkland
Spanaway

WEST VIRGINIA

Charles Town
Rainelle

WISCONSIN

WYOMING

Lovell
Powell
Kemmerer
Gillette

CANADA

Lindsay
Ontario
Saskatoon

Christmas Jars have also been given to someone in need in **ENGLAND, TAIWAN, UKRAINE, ITALY, INDONESIA, and GERMANY**

REAL-LIFE CHRISTMAS JARS ACCOUNTS

"I've often wondered how a person repays kindness. I know now...with a Christmas Jar.

As a young mother with four small children I struggled for years to make it from day to day. There were many times when I had to depend on the generous goodwill of the Salvation Army and other food banks in my area to provide nourishment for my children.

My children are grown now and my life has been blessed in ways I never thought possible.

A little over a year ago I started my Christmas jar. Every day I deposited my spare change into the jar. Those deposits became an opportunity for me to concentrate on how thankful I was for all that had been given to me. Tonight, as I prepared to hand my jar full of blessings off to someone else, I reflected on my year of blessings. Even on the not-so-good days there was something to be thankful for.

Before leaving home this evening, I said a quiet prayer asking God to lead me to the person He intended to receive my Christmas Jar. I drove six miles from my home to Harrisburg, PA, without a plan or a specific destination in mind. All that was certain is that I would know who it was when I saw them.

In the parking lot of Toys R Us I found her. My heart started beating harder than Thumper's foot the second I realized who was getting the jar. But the thought of approaching a complete stranger in a parking was both exciting and scary.

With one deep breath and a pull of the door handle, I made my move.

"Hi, I would like to give this jar to you for Christmas."

"Are you kidding me," the woman said.

"No, Merry Christmas"

"Wow," she said. "Merry Christmas to you, too."

As fast as that, it was over.

I returned to my car where my daughter was waiting, and as soon as the door was closed we both began to cry. As if a year full of blessings wasn't already enough, God blessed me again tonight. And tomorrow? A new jar begins.

- Patricia Brown (Shiremanstown, Pennsylvania)

As a family, having the Christmas Jar on the kitchen counter has been a constant reminder of our united effort to do something for someone else. The beauty of a selfless act of giving will never cease to move or amaze me! After delivering our first jar, we felt such a sense of pride in doing something that we knew would immediately benefit these dear friends.

--Amy Brindley (Galloway, Ohio)

In December of 2005 a terminally ill five-year-old, Cameron Birch, was counting his pennies to give away. This year his family is counting pennies in his place. An anonymous donor (inspired by the book *Christmas Jars*) had donated a large jar of loose change, saved throughout the year, to Cameron who had recently undergone treatment for a brain tumor.

Cameron decided to use the money from the jar not for his treatments, but to help sick kids he met during his Primary Children's Hospital visits.

"It wasn't a shock when he got the Christmas jar and said, 'Let's buy toys for the kids at the hospital.' He is an amazing kid," said Matt Birch, Cameron's father. "From the minute he got sick he never once complained. He always talked about how it hurt his heart to see kids who were sick."

The toddler's tumor came back from remission around the same time the jar was placed on his porch. He passed away two months later, before he was able to purchase the toys to be given to the hospital. His older brothers delivered the toys in his place.

"A month after his death we were finally able to take the money from the Christmas jar and buy the toys for the hospital," Birch said. "Right now there are children playing with new toys at the hospital because of the spirit of one little five-year-old boy, and an anonymous giver who understands the true meaning of Christmas and giving."

"Cameron sums up what a Christmas jar does," he added. "He forgot about himself and gave to others."

Earlier that year, in summer 2005, following chemotherapy treatments, Cameron decided to buy something for his friends in the hospital who had cancer.

The five-year-old set up a snack stand at a July 24 event and raised several hundred dollars.

"He didn't want to spend the money. The only thing he said was, 'OK, Dad, when can we buy the toys for the kids?'"

"The Christmas jar he donated was just another example of him being selfless. And that is how he spent his final 13 months, helping other people."

In memory of Cameron, the family carries on the Christmas jar tradition.

For the past year, Cameron's older brothers put a part of their allowance in the jar every week.

"It's not an easy thing for an 8 and 11-year-old to give up their money," Birch said. "But it is a great way to keep the Christmas Spirit in your heart all year long. It will be an annual tradition that we do forever."

- The Birch Family (Farmington, Utah)

“I am an optician and one of the ‘perks’ of my job is that I get a \$25 bonus for each Lasik patient that comes to our practice. I determined in my heart that I would put that bonus money in my ‘jar’ for the whole year. God really blessed that promise as this has been our best year yet for Lasik patients. My jar overflows as does my heart as I think of what a joy I will receive from giving my jar this year.”

- Brenda Kaus (Conneaut, Ohio)

I am 13 years old and was diagnosed with CML (leukemia) in September of 2006. I am currently in the hospital undergoing radiation and chemo in preparation for a bone marrow transplant. At Christmas, a friend of our family showed up on our doorstep with a jar full of coins from an anonymous person. There was a letter explaining that it was a Christmas Jar and that there was supposed to be a book to go along with it. However, they had been unable to find a copy of the book but were going to get one to me as soon as they could. In a week or so, a copy of the book arrived on my doorstep from Barnes and Noble. What a wonderful surprise!

-Matthew Litchfield (Hopkinsville, Kentucky)

2007 was a hard year for our family. It started with my husband being wrongfully accused of some horrible things at work, and fired from his job in January. Because he was in the healthcare field, his certification was being reviewed by the state board. We hired lawyers and fought...but unfortunately, his name was not cleared fully. We felt that we lost our battle against a very biased board.

With no luck finding steady employment, he left healthcare and worked several jobs in construction. We were having a very hard time paying bills with unsteady work schedules. Our families and our church helped quite a bit, but feeling the opposite of self sufficient is a HORRIBLE feeling.

In July, we had our third son, a true blessing during a dark time in our life. I then began a hard battle with postpartum depression and anxiety disorders. By October my husband had a steady job but it still didn't pay enough to cover our bills. We felt that getting back on our feet was not an option for us. However, we were grateful for the job that he had and kept plugging along.

Christmas came and my family visited from out of town. It was the first time since 1989 that we were all together for the holiday. It was wonderful. Then, at church the Sunday before Christmas, we were handed \$200! We could pay our power bill before it got turned off! A great Christmas present. Later that afternoon, as I stepped out of my house, a young girl came up and handed me a Christmas Jar full of coins and dollar bills, along with the book. I was shocked and didn't know what to say or do except to say "thank you!" I showed my husband the gifts and we were very humbled. Blessings from Heaven were handed to us that day. We were able to buy a few Christmas presents with the money from our Christmas Jar for our family. It was so nice to give back, when we thought we didn't have the money to do so.

After reading the book, I was humbled to be such a part of an enormous legacy of love being shared through a simple story and the thought and love of others.

-Sarah Widdison (Mesa, Arizona)

“Two years ago I was diagnosed with colon cancer and that year went through surgery and six months of chemotherapy. I picked up *Christmas Jars* at our bookstore and I was wonderfully touched by its sweet spirit. I didn't feel like I could do much for Christmas due to the surgery, but I had been putting change in a big plastic Coke bottle that my daughter had given me. My sister and I found three perfect jars to put the money in. I want them ready so that if someone needs a little extra during the year, I can be an angel who can mysteriously help. It just feels good.

- **Carma Mirabal (Hayward, California)**

“Every day, as you make purchases, you want to get change just so you can put it in your Christmas jar. It's like the spirit of Christmas is with you all year long. The book's message has inspired our whole family. Last year, we saved our spare change for 11 months in a large pickle jar. We collected \$183.

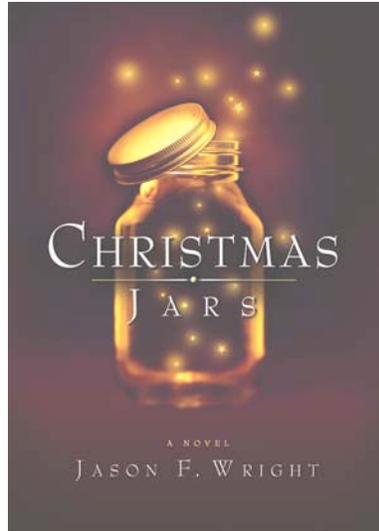
Saving pocket change all year is simple and not a huge sacrifice. Now, Christmas shopping for our family is an anticipated event as the jar reminds us that helping another family is the best way to enjoy and celebrate Christmas.

--**Kib Jensen (Provo, Utah)**

“We've talked about putting our jars together and using the funds to purchase books for one our children's homes here in the city of Indianapolis. My family has not decided what to do with our jar yet. I have several families in mind including a very good friend of mine who just lost her 44-year-old husband to melanoma. He left her and two girls behind.

As the holiday approaches I will concentrate more on the recipient. The whole act of saving and giving has really touched my children who are 14 and 12. I really believe that the act of giving Christmas Jars spells out exactly what the holidays should be about.

-**Laurie Paisley (Indianapolis, Indiana)**



Reviews

"Just like *It's a Wonderful Life*, *Christmas Jars* is American storytelling at its best. It is filled with sheer joy that can change your perspective and your heart."

- *Glenn Beck, TV and Radio Host*

"Beautifully written. I believe the Christmas Jars tradition will change lives."

- *Richard Paul Evans, New York Times bestselling author of The Christmas Box and Finding Noel*

"This inspirational Christmas novella will engage readers' hearts and require at least a half of box of tissues. It wouldn't be at all surprising if this story inspires many readers to start making Christmas jars of their own."

- *Publishers Weekly*

"In the tradition of Catherine Ryan Hyde's *Pay It Forward*, Wright's holiday novel could inspire others to Christmas generosity."

- *Library Journal*

SUGGESTED MEDIA QUESTIONS

Christmas Jars and Christmas Jars Reunion

1. What is a “Christmas jar”?
2. Traditions play an important role in people’s lives. What inspired the Christmas jar tradition, and then to write about it in a book?
3. Are any of the elements or characters pulled from your own life?
4. With more than 500,000 copies sold, the book has enjoyed tremendous success. What has been the biggest surprise for you?
5. The idea of starting a jar is such a simple, yet powerful thing to do. What stories have you heard from people starting their own Christmas jars after reading the book?
6. Can you share some stories of people who have received a jar?
7. Do you think it is an innate trait in people to want to help the less fortunate?
8. Why is it so important to give the gift secretly? Don’t most people want some credit for their good deeds?
9. Adoption plays a role in the story. Do you have personal experiences with adoption? Why did you choose to include adoption as one of the main elements of the story?
10. You reference the goal of trying to place 1,001 jars in your new book *Christmas Jars Reunion*. Is that a personal goal? Is there more to that wish?
11. If you could choose one impression for people to walk away with after reading *Christmas Jars* and your new book, *Christmas Jars Reunion*, what would it be?



AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY



Photo by Julie Napear

Jason Wright

Jason Wright is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Christmas Jars* and *The Wednesday Letters*. Additional books include *Recovering Charles* and his upcoming releases, *Christmas Jars Reunion* and *Penny's Christmas Jar Miracle*. He has been a regular contributor on Fox News, offering political commentary, and is the founding editor of PoliticalDerby.com. Jason has also appeared on CNN and been the guest on dozens of local and regional radio programs. He enjoys volunteering and has created a literary program dedicated to creative writing for middle-school students in the central Virginia area.

Raised in Charlottesville, Virginia, Jason fell in love with Virginia's Shenandoah Valley while researching the area for his book, *The Wednesday Letters*. With the enthusiastic blessing of his wife, Kodi, he relocated their family to the historic town of Woodstock. A sign on their door reads, "Friends welcome. Family by appointment only." Jason's most recent book, *Christmas Jars Reunion*, takes place in a southern town along U.S. Highway 4. To date, he has no plans for moving south.

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