Project Night Night Speaking Points

WHY:

* Each year, 1.5 million American children are homeless.
* Children arriving at a shelter often come directly from an emergency situation, either domestic violence, extreme poverty, or disaster. Most of them have only the clothes on their backs.
* The upheaval and distress of their situations often result in learning disabilities, anxiety, and depression -- at 2-3 times the rate they occur in children living in homes.

WHAT:

* Every year, Project Night Night provides 25,000 children across the country with Night Night packages, free of charge, when they arrive at a homeless shelter.
* Each Night Night package contains childhood and educational essentials to feel secure, cozy, ready to learn, and significant: a stuffed animal, a blanket, and an age-appropriate book.
* The stuffed animal and blanket offer comfort, security and a sense of ownership. The book provides an opportunity to develop vital language and imagination skills.

WHO:

* Night Night packages are assembled by over 10,000 volunteers across the country each year. People from neighborhoods, workplaces, scout troops, churches, and schools buy or collect items to fill up our signature canvas tote bags, and then deliver the Night Night packages to homeless children staying in shelters in their local area.
* Through our Adopt a Night Night Package program, we provide meaningful, hands-on volunteer opportunities that establish a foundation for change in our own communities.

WHAT WE NEED:

* Donations of new blankets and stuffed animals, as well as like-new children’s books.
* Volunteers who are looking to make a simple but meaningful change in their community, either within their neighborhoods or at their companies.
* Financial assistance from corporations or foundations to fill the gaps in donated items and help to pay for incurred costs such as shipping, storage and supplies.

IMPACT (choose 1-2):

* A shelter coordinator in Denver told us that the social workers at her shelter have really come to rely on Project Night Night bags when they need to remove children from their homes or are working with a homeless family. She said “It is such a blessing to be able to give these children something to comfort them when they have been through such a traumatic experience.”
* A shelter director in Ohio told us that the Night Night packages are an important part of their intake process. When volunteers are socializing with children on their first night, they give them tote bags to help them acclimate as their parents meet with the shelter staff. She said “The best part is when we see the blankies, stuffed animals and books laying in their beds and intermixed with their small amount of belongings.”
* We also heard the story of a mom named Lisa, who came to the YWCA shelter in San Jose with her 3 kids and barely any belongings, since she had to flee her house due to domestic violence. The kids were suddenly away from home in a strange new environment. They had no toys, no books…When the YWCA staff brought the Project Night Night bags their faces brightened up. The shelter coordinator said “They didn’t expect to receive such a beautiful gift. Their mom was so thankful. Now they all had their own stuffed animal, blanket and books to comfort them at night.”
* One of the first parents we heard from, back in 2007, told us “My child and I were in a battered women's shelter when we received our package. It was the first time I had seen my little girl smile all day. She fell asleep with the blanket in her arms.”