

The Cup-for-a-Can COCOA STAND



ILLUSTRATION BY BRAD TEARE

By Meagan Becker
(Based on a true story)

“Be anxiously engaged in a good cause” (D&C 58:27).

It just doesn't seem like Christmas this year,” Porter said. He dropped his backpack on a kitchen chair. “There's no snow. And I don't have any friends here.”

“Well, we can't change the weather,” Mom said. She gave him a hug. “And I know moving has been hard for you.”

“I just wish I had some friends,” Porter said. He pulled a piece of paper from his pocket.

“What's that?” Mom asked.

“It's about a food drive at school.”

“Let me see,” she said, handing him a cup of hot chocolate. “Maybe if you help with the food drive, you can meet some new people and make friends.”

“Maybe.”

Porter grabbed a handful of marshmallows and started dropping them into his cup one by one.

“Really,” Mom said. “I bet there's a way to make friends *and* help people feel the Christmas spirit.”

Porter wasn't paying attention. He was thinking about his friends in his old neighborhood.

“Remember when we did the lemonade stand with Anne?” he said. “I wish we could do that again.”

Plop. Plop. Plop. He added three more marshmallows. “But nobody wants to drink lemonade in December, even if there isn't any snow.”

“Maybe they'd like to drink something warm instead.”

“Like hot chocolate . . .” Porter glanced at his cup. “I know! We could have a hot chocolate stand!”

Mom smiled. “Let's do it.”

Porter looked at the food drive flyer.

“What if we asked people for a can of food instead of money?” Porter said. “Then we could donate the food to the food drive.”

“A cup of cocoa for a can of food,” Mom said. “I like it.”

They went right to work. Mom made sure they had plenty of hot chocolate, disposable cups, and marshmallows. Together they made flyers and gave them to all of their neighbors. On Saturday morning the Cup-for-a-Can Cocoa Stand was open. And it was busy.

“That man just handed me 10 cans of food for one cup of hot chocolate!”

Porter said to Mom. “I've met lots of people, and they're all really friendly.”

Soon he had stacked more than a hundred cans of food on a table next to the cocoa!

“I can't wait to tell Anne about this,” Porter said. “This is even better than the lemonade stand. Maybe she'll do hot chocolate too.”

“I'm proud of you,” Mom said. “You found a way to meet people and help others too.”

“It feels more like Christmas now,” Porter said. “Even without the snow.” ♦

The author lives in Ukraine.

A lemonade stand at Christmas? Porter and his mother had a better idea.

Let's start our own cup-for-a-can stand.



Turn the page for a cocoa mix recipe!



“Those who lose themselves in service to others grow and flourish.”

President Thomas S. Monson,
“Serve the Lord with Love,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2014, 4.