

## Baptist Churches Collect Millions of Pennies for At-Risk Kids

**American Baptist churches have collected more than 2 million pennies in an effort to raise awareness of the extent of child poverty throughout the United States and Puerto Rico.**

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### Correction Appended

American Baptist churches have collected more than 2 million pennies in an effort to raise awareness of the extent of child poverty throughout the United States and Puerto Rico.

Their goal is to gather 14 million pennies to represent the 14 million at-risk children in the two countries.

"Fourteen million pennies placed end-to-end would reach 165 miles and require close to three hours of driving time from one end to the other. That represents a lot of children who need to feel God's loving care," American Baptist Churches USA stated Friday.

The Penny Project was inspired by youth at a church in New London, N.H., who raised 60,000 pennies to represent the number of children living in poverty in their state.

Youth and other members in American Baptist churches nationwide are being encouraged to take inspiration from those at First Baptist Church and do the same.

When First Baptist Church in Kermit, W. Va., launched the penny initiative the small congregation began drawing the attention of local media and the wider community. People outside the church contributed to the cause dropping off coins and sending checks.

The donations in Kermit will be directed to to ABLE Families, a local Catholic agency that runs a free afterschool program for the children of low-income families.

"What I especially like about it is that the money is going to stay right here in West Virginia or even in our community, since we have underprivileged children right here at our backdoor," said church clerk Alice Smith.

Churches in other cities are using the pennies for other causes such as purchasing backpacks for children or aiding homeless youth. Avon Baptist Church in Avon, Mass., is using its collected pennies to host birthday parties for children who live in a homeless shelter.

In total, more than 100 American Baptist churches and other organizations have signed up to participate in The Penny Project. American Baptist Churches USA is a 1.3 million-member denomination with congregations in the United States and Puerto Rico.

### **Correction:** Saturday, April 17, 2010:

An article on Friday, March 19, 2010, about the American Baptist churches' penny project incorrectly reported that the donations collected by First Baptist Church in Kermit, W. Va., will be directed to Christian Help/Able Families. The Christian Post confirmed with Barry Hudock, executive director of ABLE Families, that the donations were directed to ABLE Families. Christian Help is a separate nonprofit organization.

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