



## Boxtops are helping Ramona schools

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Prior to the start of school, PTA volunteer and parent Debra Bowen was trying to figure out a way to involve the entire community in a General Mills fundraising program called Boxtops for Education.

The successful program had netted some local schools up to \$1,460, but she wanted to try to double, triple, even quadruple that amount.

She knew if she brought the fundraiser to the people, they would surely get involved. So, in the heat of August, she was out at several locations placing "drop boxes" where residents could easily spot them and begin to participate once the word got out. She also contacted the *Sentinel* to help spread the news.

The results have been great, reports Bowen. She has seen an increase in awareness and donations and hopes the community will keep up the good work, especially with the holiday season coming, which means residents will most likely be using a lot of the qualifying boxtops.

In short, the fundraising opportunity through the General Mills Company can raise up to \$60,000 per school per year. All residents need to do is look for the pink 1/2-inch to 1-inch label on thousands of products (for a list of products, visit [www.btfe.com](http://www.btfe.com)). You can't miss them, said Bowen.

Once the the boxtops have been cut, simply bundle them together, place them in an envelope, label the front as to which school you'd like the money to go to, and then just drop them off at one of the participating retailers.

You can find the green boxes at the following locations: Albertsons, Stater Bros., Foodland, Ramona Unified School District Offices at 720 Ninth St. and the Ramona Senior Center. Or, they may be delivered to any school or even mailed to her at P.O. Box 1811, Ramona, CA 92065.

Schools have used the money to purchase a myriad of things from basic supplies to books. Some schools have used the money to update their technology.

This year, the schools plan to do the same, using money wherever it is most needed. In difficult budgetary times, every little bit helps, and Bowen is grateful for the surge in participation.

"I want to thank the community for a job well done," said Bowen, referred to as the Boxtops Queen in Ramona. "They are really helping our schools."

Besides clipping boxes, there are two additional ways community members may help, and they both come in handy with the holiday shopping season just around the corner. If you visit the Box Tops Marketplace ([www.btfe.com/marketplace](http://www.btfe.com/marketplace)) and complete your shopping through the site, up to 8 percent of qualifying products is automatically donated to the school of your choice. There is no additional cost and it's easy to sign up.

Another way to help is to buy any books online at Barnes and Nobles through the Box Tops Reading Room. Schools will receive 6 percent of the any new book purchases and 3 percent of all other online purchases.

For more information, or to learn more about the program, visit [www.btfe.com](http://www.btfe.com). The site lists all products associated with Boxtops as well as shows consumers how to purchase through their Web site.

You may also contact Bowen personally at [www.RamonaBoxTops@yahoo.com](mailto:www.RamonaBoxTops@yahoo.com) or 760-789-2213.

Once people get used to it, they find the Boxtops program is an easy way to give to the schools. And, Bowen has made it easier than ever with her decorated drop boxes and online suggestions.