GIVING BACK

Some children have to be brave far too young



Childhood is meant to be the safest time of anyone's life. For some children it isn't. A child who has learnt that Friday nights are louder than other nights. A child who counts footsteps in the hallway, and knows which ones mean hide. A child who, by Sunday evening, has lost count of something no child should ever have to count. None of them chose any of it — and all of it happens quietly, behind ordinary front doors, in every corner of the country.

That is what this page is really about. Not gift-making, but how small something can be and still matter enormously to a child who has very little: a ribbon they can undo themselves, a smell that means somebody thought of them on an ordinary Tuesday, proof in an object that they were counted.

So a share of everything the workshop earns goes towards those children, especially around Christmas. It is set aside first, before anything else, because any of this only works when people choose to spend with us — and that should be worth something beyond the piece itself.

THE CHILDREN

Carrying more than any child should

Going into care

A child who learnt to read the mood of a room before they learnt to read a book, who is waiting for the door that opens onto somewhere safe — and who needs proof that somebody is staying in their corner.

Living in hardship

A child who has learnt the price of things and asks for nothing, because asking feels rude. No child should have to feel like the odd one out.

Facing illness

A child whose days are measured in appointments, corridors and hospital beds — or who has never seen the sea but could pick its sound out of a hundred. An hour of ordinary childhood is worth a great deal.

ESPECIALLY AROUND CHRISTMAS

The time we give most

For most of us, Christmas is a crowded kitchen, a table full of food and a house that's too warm and too loud. For a child in a care home, a refuge or a hospital ward, it can be the loneliest night of the whole year — the night when being different hurts most, because everyone else is unwrapping something.

That's why the giving rises at Christmas. Fifteen market dates across Kent between now and December, every wreath on a door and every hanging in a window through the season, all add to a little pot meant for the children who might otherwise wake up to nothing at all. It won't change the world. It might change one December for one child.

HONEST ABOUT IT

One pair of hands, a real promise

Right now Gifts of Kent is one pair of hands, a garden workbench and a cup of tea going cold beside me. That means the share I can give is small, because what comes in is small — but it's genuine, and it's a promise rather than a good intention. As the work grows, the giving grows with it. I'd rather be truthful about the size of it than grand about the idea.



No two gifts are ever the same.
No child should be forgotten either.

Your part in it

There's nothing extra for you to do and nothing to remember. You ask for something beautiful to be made, we settle the details together, and a share of it quietly goes to a child who needs proof that somebody thought of them. Every piece counts towards it — and so does every kind word, share or recommendation.

Know a cause that needs us?

If you work with, volunteer for, or simply admire a group that looks after children going into care, living in hardship or facing illness — in any corner of the country — I would love to hear about it. This giving is meant to be shaped by the people who see the need up close, not decided from behind a workbench.

Want something made that gives back?

Commission a wreath, a candle arrangement or a keepsake — from the shop, or at one of my Kent market stalls — and a share of it goes to a child who needs it.