

LINKS History and Impact

Box work, now known as LINKS (Loving, Interested Nazarenes, Knowing and Sharing) began in the Southern California District in 1916. The idea was to ship boxes of personal supplies to missionary families. The box work project grew until, in 1922, a Box Work Committee of three was appointed with Mrs. Paul F. (Ada) Bresee as chairman.

In 1976, the LINKS program was introduced, expanding box work to the “adoption” of a missionary (active or retired) or missionary family. This involves praying for them, writing letters, providing cash for personal needs, and remembering the missionaries and their children on birthdays, at Christmas, and on anniversaries.

For many churches, LINKS has meant a chance to lovingly pick out a few things at the store and send them overseas to a missionary family. Sometimes missionary kids’ biggest thrills come in opening parcels sent by people they have never personally met. Today, some churches opt to send an e-card or e-gift card. It saves on postage and ensures the missionary doesn’t incur customs fees when the package arrives. Instead of waiting for a box to arrive at their home, the joy often arrives now in a missionary’s e-mail inbox.

For missionaries, LINKS has meant a connection with their Nazarene family “back home”, knowing that a congregation is thinking of them. One missionary commented that their family was once going through a particularly stressful situation in a creative access area. They couldn’t publicize the situation because of the sensitive nature of where they serve. But, they clearly felt the prayers of their LINKS churches, and the situation resolved in a way that could only have been God’s work. The missionary said, “Our family looked at each other and agreed that someone must have been praying for us.”