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Log on to make resolutions to help others in 2009

By Lilla Zuill

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NEW YORK (Reuters) - Instead of making vows to lose weight, save money or get fit, a U.S. charity is challenging people to log on to the Internet to make New Year resolutions to help others.

And people are taking the bait.

Dozens have signed on since Families First, a non-profit family services agency in Georgia, launched its site <http://www.iam-thesolution.org> this week.

"It really started by raising a question of what would happen if people made a resolution, in addition to ones for their own lives, to help the lives of others," said Pat Showell, president of Families First.

"Whether people are committed to our kind of (family) issues or other issues, it ultimately benefits the community," she added.

Keith Brooking, a linebacker with the Atlanta Falcons football team, signed on with a promise that his family foundation will give a thousand pairs of athletic shoes to foster children in his home state of Georgia.

"My mother kept foster children, and I saw the impact that she made," said Brooking, of what motivated his pledge. "It was near and dear to me."

That may only be just the first step. Brooking said he and his wife, the parents of two toddlers, have discussed fostering or even adopting when their own children are older.

Other members of the new site have signed up to help feed the homeless, promising to donate produce from a vegetable patch, while another wants to establish a training center where youths can hopefully translate game skills from playing chess into life skills. Another started knitting to be able to make baby blankets.

While many people start the year with good intentions but fail to follow them, the new site tries to make sure people keep their resolutions for others.

The site allows people to create a profile, set deadlines, track their progress and contact others with similar resolutions, according to Families First.

Resolutions "whether small or large, when you combine those the impact can be tremendous," Showell said.

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