

“Helping People Help People Mobilize the Gospel”



BUSES Christmas Shoebox Gift Report

Children of the Kentucky towns of Linefork, Whitesburg and Cumberland were the recipients of your shoebox gifts. This area is designated as “DISTRESSED” by the US government’s Appalachian Regional Commission for having a poverty level twice that of the national level. What a privilege it was to bless these kids and their families. If you’re prone to motion sickness, these mountain hills and curves would have done you in. The local people were kind and welcoming. That was partly because Pastor Mary Bennett of Sonshine Children’s Center (our base of operations) spent weeks preparing for our arrival and setting up the outreaches for the shoeboxes to be distributed. Mary is amazing – caring for the children at the orphanage, feeding needy families each month, pastoring the church and reaching out into the community. Everywhere we went people knew of Mary and had somehow been touched by her Christ-like love. *“What you’re doing here is a real blessing for us. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. This really helps our family.”* Noreen was just one parent we met struggling to provide for her kids as well as her neighbor kids whose situation is worse than hers. It was a joy to bless her and an honor to pray with her. Judy, a local lady who helped organize the children at a housing authority complex, just cried and cried. *“The children here have seen horrible things this past year, but these gifts are like a ray of sunshine on a cloudy day. Thank you so much! Please thank those who made these gifts. They’re wonderful! I just can’t believe it!”* One little boy, Justin, immediately emptied everything out of his box then walked around with a red balloon in his mouth smiling at everyone. We gave diaper bags to expecting mothers and baby boxes with diapers to moms with infants. We even saw some older kids which has encouraged us to bring back the “Teen” category for ages 11-14 for this coming Christmas. While there, BUSES was able to do some maintenance at the church and orphanage, and we preached as well. One mom called out as we left, *“Y’all come back now, ya hear.”* Thank you to everyone who gave a shoebox gift or donated money. Together, we shared the love of Jesus, blessed some well deserving children, encouraged some struggling parents and brought glory to God.



The Shoebox Spotlight:

We are truly blessed to have so many partners each Christmas participating in our Christmas Shoebox Gift Project. We have local churches who contribute shoeboxes gifts, but we also have churches as far away as southern Ohio, Pennsylvania and Maryland who send them as well. This year, a new church-plant currently meeting at a local college took it on as their Christmas project. A variety of different groups join in too – Awana Clubs, Sunday School Classes, Girl Scouts, Brownie Troops, Women’s Societies, Elementary Schools, High Schools and others. A marketing class at Lorain County Community College used it as a class project, promoted it on campus and collected shoebox gifts from fellow students. We received comments from widows, senior groups and individual families all expressing the blessing they received by doing the shoeboxes. There were some that collected new coats, shoes, hats, gloves, socks and... Barbie Dolls as well. Mat Szychowicz did his best to keep things organized at our facility, and several local people volunteered their time to help. Interns from the Remnant School of Ministry also pitched in. This truly was a group effort. We all came together for the sake of the children. Make plans now for your family, church and group to participate in BUSES’s 2012 Christmas Shoebox Gift Project. We’re going to be revamping our program and the promo materials. We look forward to partnering with you again in December. You will be blessed!



The Smock Family of Westerville, Ohio put together 198 shoeboxes. Wow! They work on it all year-round.



Shoeboxes in Lorain, Ohio:

BUSES International is not just concerned about blessing the children in the Appalachia Mountains or in foreign countries. We want to reach the kids right here in our hometown which has a poverty rating of more than twice that of the national level. We partnered with longtime friend, Pastor Crusita Marrero of El Faro Iglesia (The Lighthouse) located on the west side of town. Every Wednesday, Pastor Crusita helps operate the church’s choice food pantry and hot meal service. El Faro hosted a special Christmas Celebration Service where needy families and families of inmates in the local jail were invited to come and celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus, enjoy a specially prepared meal and receive shoebox gifts for the kids. It was a wonderful night of celebration and love. *Koinonia*, the Greek word for communion, fellowship and community, was truly experienced. Thank you for partnering with BUSES International in reaching out to our “neighbors” and blessing these children.

Haiti Project Update:

Construction continues on the Haiti Mobile Medical / Dental Clinic. We are still in need of more funds to complete it. Our goal is to deliver this clinic sometime later this year. Pray with us for God’s provision. \$10,000 is needed to complete it and \$5,000 to ship it.



BUSES’s Nigeria Trip postponed: If you follow news from Africa, you know Nigeria has experienced some difficult situations over the past several months. In January, BUSES International was scheduled to travel to Enugu, Nigeria to work with the ministry operating the Mobile Surgical Clinic we built a couple of years ago. Issues of an oil spill in the main port, labor strikes, protests in the streets over rising fuel prices, terrorists bombing police and military installations and radicals killing Christians and torching churches have severely affected the country. Our trip was postponed, but we are rescheduled to go at the end of March. Please pray for peace in Nigeria, pray for our Christian brothers and sisters, and pray for BUSES as we go.