

8.5 Million Shoe Boxes Bound for Needy Kids in 100 Countries

Volunteers have been working tirelessly at more than 3,200 collection sites where millions of shoe boxes packed with school supplies, toys and necessity items were dropped off by caring people across the United States.

National Collection Week is wrapping up for the world's largest Christmas project of its kind—Operation Christmas Child—where participants fill empty shoe boxes with items for kids suffering from natural disaster, war, terrorism, famine and poverty. Soon, these shoe boxes will be delivered to 8.5 million kids worldwide.

“Every year we pack shoe box gifts for kids we’ve never met,” says Courtney Doran of Atlanta who packs Operation Christmas Child shoe box gifts with her sister. “We were extra busy this fall, but still got to help needy kids by packing our boxes online through ‘Build a Box.’ We loved it!”

Many U.S. families are choosing to pack shoe box gifts virtually through “Build a Box,” an online giving tool. It’s an easy way to impact a child in need. Volunteers can visit the project’s website at www.opc.org, select a child’s age and gender, shop through an online selection of gifts, virtually “pack” them in an empty shoe box, and finish it off with an uploaded photo and note of encouragement. Then through tracking technology, donors can “follow” their box to the destination country where it will be hand-delivered. Donors can also “gift” their box to family or friends—giving someone the opportunity to give to a child in need.

Operation Christmas Child, a project of international Christian relief and evangelism organization Samaritan’s

Purse, uses simple gift-filled shoe boxes to let hurting children know they are loved and not forgotten. Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has hand-delivered more than 86 million gift-filled shoe boxes to needy children in more than 130 countries.