



Spreading the Gospel through Shoeboxes



Kingsland Baptist Church (KBC) has been spreading the Gospel through shoeboxes for eight years. Located in North Chesterfield, VA, Kingsland Baptist Church serves as one of the over 4,000 US drop-off locations for Operation Christmas Child. The church began serving in this role in 2015.

Operation Christmas Child, a branch of Samaritan's Purse, collects shoeboxes filled with fun toys, school supplies, and hygiene items. These shoeboxes are delivered to children worldwide to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way. For many of these children, the gift-filled shoebox is the first present they have ever received. Every shoebox is an

left: Anne Sewastynowicz serves at the Kingsland Baptist Church drop-off location.



Left to right: Cathy Mitchell, Heather Capel, and Dan Capel

opportunity to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the children, their parents, and other family members.

Throughout the year, Kingsland Baptist members donate items for the shoeboxes. In early November, AWANA members and other volunteers gather to put the gifts in shoeboxes. Operation Christmas Child (OCC) calls such events packing parties. The completed boxes are added to the overall total collected.

In 2015, KBC collected 708 boxes. In 2021, they collected 2,170—more than triple since their first year as a drop-off location.

During National Collection Week (November 14-21, 2022), KBC utilized approximately 20 short-term volunteers and several year-round volunteers. KBC member Patti Mitts coordinates many of the drop-off details for the church. Joanie Chauncey (also a KBC member) previously served in that role but accepted the position of area coordinator for OCC Richmond West in 2021.

“I love volunteering at the KBC drop-off because it serves as a place to see donors I haven’t seen in a year,” said Chauncey. “I also see the diversity of donors from



Roy Robinson collected boxes at the Kingsland Baptist drop-off location where they are then processed for Operation Christmas Child.

all nations and walks of life. Donors pray in their heart language, a beautiful reminder that the shoeboxes are going to the ends of the earth. Watching children bring in their boxes and pray over them is heartwarming. I am so thankful God is using me to help move the shoeboxes to their final destination where children will hear the Good News of Jesus.”

Because KBC is the only drop-off location in the area that stays open late on the last Monday of National Collection Week, the church often receives last-minute shoeboxes. One year, a group of ladies from Maryland traveling home on Interstate 95 from an event saw that the KBC location was still open, so they detoured to deliver their shoeboxes. Others have come from miles away to give a single shoebox.

Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child, the world’s largest Christmas project of its kind, has collected and delivered more than 188 million shoebox gifts to children in more than 170 countries and territories.

In 2021, Operation Christmas Child collected enough shoeboxes to reach another 10.5 million children in countries like Ukraine, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, Peru, the Philippines, and Rwanda—over 170 countries total. More than 9.7 million shoeboxes were collected worldwide in 2021, with more than 9.1 million collected in the US. Final figures for 2022 have yet to be released.

In addition to millions of shoebox packers, a network of more than 15,000 volunteers (9,000 US; 6,000 worldwide) serve to carry out the project year-round. ■