

200 MILLION



SHOEBOXES

# SPECIAL REPORT

AUSTRALIA | NEW ZEALAND



 **GOOD NEWS. GREAT JOY.**

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## A NOTE FROM FRANKLIN GRAHAM

Dear Friend,

We give God the glory as we celebrate a historic Operation Christmas Child milestone: **200 million shoebox gifts packed since 1993**. I am thankful to God for all the boys and girls around the world who have had an opportunity to hear the Good News that “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved” (Romans 10:13).

Every shoebox prayerfully packed in Jesus’ Name is special. We have seen time and time again how God places just the right gift into the hands of a specific child. This gift is a tangible expression of God’s love for a child in desperate need.

God is using Operation Christmas Child and our discipleship program, The Greatest Journey, to open doors for the Gospel in places where people have never heard about Jesus. As boys and girls receive Jesus as their Savior, many begin sharing their faith with family and friends. Their witness is transforming entire villages and leading to new churches being started.

Thank you for your prayers and your service. We couldn’t do this project without you. May God bless you.

Sincerely,



Franklin Graham  
President, Samaritan’s Purse



MORE THAN  
**10.5 MIL**  
CHILDREN WORLDWIDE  
RECEIVED AN OPERATION  
CHRISTMAS CHILD  
SHOEBOX IN 2022

MORE THAN  
**2.4 MIL**  
CHILDREN MADE A  
DECISION FOR  
CHRIST IN 2022



# SHOEBOX COLLECTION

# 10,599,907

Shoeboxes were collected worldwide!

## SHOEBOXES COLLECTED IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND WERE SENT TO:

# 228,104

Shoeboxes were collected in Australia and New Zealand in 2022



**15,811**

TASMANIA



**35,213**

VICTORIA



**38,729**

QUEENSLAND



**76,292**

NEW SOUTH WALES



**18,673**

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



**23,675**

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



**13,740**

NEW ZEALAND



**5,971**

PACKED ONLINE



**UKRAINE**  
10,706



**FIJI**  
24,429



**PAPUA NEW GUINEA**  
31,931



**SOLOMON ISLANDS**  
10,815



**PHILIPPINES**  
73,687



**CAMBODIA**  
75,509

\*Sensitive Country 1,027 shoeboxes distributed  
(country name can not be disclosed)

# CELEBRATING 200 MILLION BLESSINGS

By God's grace, Operation Christmas Child reaches a special milestone.

We thank God for 200 million shoebox gifts packed and for all the boys and girls around the world who have had an opportunity to hear the Good News that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Gift-filled shoeboxes have been delivered to children in 175 countries and territories since the project started.

This would never have been possible without faithful shoebox packers lovingly and prayerfully preparing boxes in Jesus' Name.

These simple gifts continue to open doors for our local church partners in remote and impoverished communities to share the Gospel with children—many who have never heard about God's love for them.



## A Cross-Country Tour

Elizabeth Groff went on a special journey to help pack the symbolic 200 millionth shoebox gift. Elizabeth, who received a shoebox years ago in an orphanage in Ukraine, traveled to different drop-off locations and processing centers with the shoebox gift to encourage people to continue packing boxes.

Elizabeth participated in the cross-country celebration because she wants people to know that God is using shoebox gifts to demonstrate His love to children who are in desperate need.

"There are so many children out there just like me who have never heard of Jesus or experienced His everlasting love," she said. "I know the impact a single shoebox can make. It absolutely changed my life. There's no greater reward than being able to serve through this ministry."

At each stop along the national tour, Elizabeth added a gift item chosen by voters on our Operation Christmas Child social media platforms. She started her journey by packing a doll in Denver, Colorado, as well as items selected by the Samaritan's Purse international affiliate offices: a flashlight by the

United Kingdom; a reusable canvas bag by Canada; a plush koala toy by Australia/New Zealand; a jump rope by Germany; and a pencil sharpener by Korea.

After visiting Denver, Elizabeth headed to Aurora, Illinois, where she added a necklace. In Nashville, Tennessee, Elizabeth packed colorful socks.

The cross-country celebration continued in Punta Gorda, Florida, where Samaritan's Purse volunteers were serving in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian. Elizabeth thanked disaster relief staff and volunteers for serving as the hands and feet of Jesus. In Florida, she added a water bottle filled with pretty hair ties to the special shoebox.

The tour wrapped up in North Carolina at the Charlotte Processing Center where Samaritan's Purse President, Franklin Graham, prayerfully dedicated the shoebox. He also added the final item to the 200 millionth gift: a shiny yellow yo-yo.



Denver, Colorado



Nashville, Tennessee



Aurora, Illinois

ABOVE: Elizabeth Groff traveled to drop-off locations and processing centers with the 200 millionth shoebox. At each stop, she added a special gift to the box.

## Elizabeth's Story

Elizabeth received her shoebox gift during a time she described as “rock bottom”—when she felt broken.

“I felt alone. I felt lost. That is where Jesus met me. He didn't leave me there,” she said. “He showed me that He loved me through a simple gift—through a shoebox.”

Elizabeth's mother turned to alcohol to try to ease her grief after her husband died when Elizabeth was only 1. When she gave birth to baby Tanya she couldn't properly care for her, and Elizabeth quickly became a mother to her younger sister. When Elizabeth was 7 years old, she decided that she wanted a better life for Tanya. The sisters ran away from home and went to live in an orphanage.

Tanya's biological father eventually found the girls at the orphanage and took Tanya home with him—but he didn't take Elizabeth. Heartbroken and alone, the young girl didn't believe that anyone would love her again.

But that changed when Elizabeth received an Operation Christmas Child shoebox. Her favorite item in her box was a shiny, yellow yo-yo. “It represented love. Someone cared enough to send me this box,” she said. “That shoebox gift was a direct response to my prayers, and it was a beacon of hope. I felt God's love. He used that box to say to me that I was not an orphan—that I was His daughter.”



Elizabeth and her family pack shoeboxes together every year for children in desperate need.

An American family adopted Elizabeth when she was 13. She joined her new family in packing 150 Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts that first year. “I had this passion in me to fill more boxes and to share the love that I once received through this gift.”

Elizabeth has never stopped packing boxes. She started a shoebox club at her school and introduced Operation Christmas Child to other teenagers. Then, as a student at Virginia Tech, Elizabeth headed a 300-member shoebox club on campus.

Elizabeth continues to pack shoeboxes with family and friends and shares her incredible story of God's faithfulness. “No matter where I go, I take Operation Christmas Child with me. I can't tell my story without the shoebox—that's where it started.”

Elizabeth's story of redemption and hope continues to unfold as she recently reunited with Tanya after years of separation. By God's grace, Elizabeth was even able to help her sister flee the war in Ukraine.

## A Special Journey

Elizabeth's journey with the symbolic 200 millionth shoebox gift culminated in war-torn Ukraine. On a bitterly cold and cloudy day, she watched as dozens of children arrived for the outreach event. Displaced and orphaned, they wore the emotional scars of war on their faces. Many had fled from bombardment and occupation in the eastern part of the country, leaving everything behind, including their beloved toys.

Yet, God used Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts to bring joy and the eternal Light of Christ into their lives. After our church partners led a special program that included games, singing, and dancing, the boys and girls sat in rapt attention as the Gospel was presented. When asked if they wanted to invite Jesus into their hearts through repentance and faith, nearly every hand was raised high.

Elizabeth gave the 200 millionth shoebox gift to 8-year-old Natalya, who immediately clung to the yellow flashlight inside of her box. She said that she was excited to have a light to help her not be afraid when she has to run to the basement during air raids.

Other children who also received gift-filled shoeboxes included Yulia's son and daughter. “This was an amazing event,” she said. “My children had to leave all of their toys, and I almost never see them happy anymore. My son, Vitaliy, kept begging me for Legos because they are his favorite, and he left them all behind when we fled our home. I am so thankful to God that he received Legos in his shoebox today.”

In Ukraine and around the world, millions of children are living in darkness and despair. We praise the Lord for the way He is using simple shoebox gifts to bring them happiness and hope now and for eternity through the Greatest Gift of All, Jesus Christ. “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

**Below: Franklin Graham met with Natalya who received the 200 millionth shoebox gift.**



# THE GREATEST JOURNEY



The Greatest Journey is a 12 week discipleship program that children can choose to participate in after receiving their Operation Christmas Child shoebox.



4,456,783

Children enrolled



2,446,707

Decisions for Christ

## GOSPEL OPPORTUNITIES IN PARADISE

FIJI



### MEET RAVINA KUMAR, NATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP COORDINATOR FOR OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD IN FIJI



**Q:** Can you share about the perception of Fiji and contrast that with the reality of it?

A: Fiji, like a coin, has two sides. The first side is the good side. Fiji is paradise—a very beautiful paradise with lovely beaches and friendly people all around. The other side of the coin are the many challenges. We have cyclones every year from November to April, and a lot of floods that hit the towns and villages. During these floods, the children are affected. Sometimes their school books get washed away. They have to leave their house and stay in evacuation centers for weeks. These are some of the challenges.

**Q:** Describe the reaction when a child opens that shoebox gift.

A: When children open their boxes, you can only hear, “Yay! Yay!” You can’t even talk, and, if you want to quiet them, it’s impossible. You can hear the laughter, you can hear the cheer, you can hear the cries, all sorts of noise. You go around and see the children showing their toys. You can see all kinds of reaction from the children. They are so into their boxes that sometimes they don’t want to go

Ravina Kumar is one of 6,100 people globally who volunteer on National Leadership Teams to guide our efforts in evangelism, discipleship, and multiplication. Read on to learn more about how the ministry is advancing the Gospel in the Pacific through gift-filled shoeboxes and our follow-up discipleship program, The Greatest Journey.

home. They close their box, and again they open it. They look again, then they close it. For a while they look in other boxes, then they open theirs again. The excitement goes and goes for I don't know how long. They all thank us. If you were there, you would be like a child, too.

**Q: How is The Greatest Journey discipleship course effective in helping children grow in their faith?**

A: The Greatest Journey program is a simple way for them to understand the love of Christ, why He came here, what He's done for us, and how He loves us. When we go to the interior, when we go into villages, we see children who receive the boxes, and they go through these 12 lessons. After their graduation, we hear the testimonies. Because they started praying through the lessons, the children now know how to pray. Through their prayers, their families are back together. Parents who were apart, they come together.

**Q: What makes you proud when you look at The Greatest Journey students?**

A: Through The Greatest Journey, they come to know new things. As a mother, if my child comes to know the truth and then accept Christ, follow Him, and understand the meaning of their own life and purpose, it fills me with joy that my child is on the right path. If they are going out sharing who

Christ is with a small memory verse from The Greatest Journey booklet, if they share with someone at the bus stand or on the playground or with anyone in the school and that child receives it, they start getting excited. It fills me with joy that my job is done. This child from The Greatest Journey class is going out and sharing. Then I can see there is the multiplication. That's what I feel as a mother—I'm so happy to see my child growing in Christ through The Greatest Journey and Operation Christmas Child.

**Q: Can you tell us why prayer is important for Operation Christmas Child and The Greatest Journey?**

A: We go through many challenges, and we know we can't do it by ourselves. "Not by might, nor by power, but by [His] Spirit" (Zechariah 4:6). When we pray, we can see the movement of God. When we pray, we can see the way has been made, the roads have been cleared. The rain stops, the flood goes down. We can see all kinds of movement when we stop and pray, because when we pray, God moves.

**Q: How can people pray for Fiji?**

A: Pray for our team as we walk together, volunteering and partnering with local churches, so that we can reach more children and touch every heart with the Gospel and the love of Jesus Christ.



*"When we pray, we can see the movement of God. When we pray, we can see the way has been made, the roads have been cleared. The rain stops, the flood goes down. We can see all kinds of movement when we stop and pray, because when we pray, God moves."*

Ravina Kumar

# ANSWERED PRAYERS

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations” (Ephesians 3:20-21).



## God Provides a Doll

Kangeloo desperately wanted a doll. Her imagination had become her companion as she would carry around a large stone and pretend that it was her doll, her friend. Kangeloo's mother, Nagee, was overwhelmed with joy as she watched her daughter hold the doll that was packed inside of her shoebox. “This is her first time to receive toys,” she said. “I'm so very happy.”



## Lighting the Way Home

Almir had to walk several miles to school every day. By the time he headed home after school, he was making the journey in the dark. Almir was so excited to find a flashlight in his shoebox gift that would make the long walk easier and safer.



## Praying for a Towel

Vetegea had been pleading with her mother for a bath towel. But her mother didn't have money to spare, so Vetegea prayed for God to provide a towel. Vetegea was thrilled when she opened her shoebox gift and saw a pink towel—a tangible answer to prayer for a little girl in a remote, impoverished village in Africa who trusted God.



## A Soccer Ball for Randy

Although basketball and volleyball are the sports of choice in the Marshall Islands, Randy likes soccer the best. He wanted to learn to play and asked his mother for a soccer ball, but she couldn't find one anywhere on their island. Randy was so excited to find both a soccer ball and pump inside his shoebox gift that was lovingly packed in Jesus' Name.



## Sandals for a Refugee

A child who fled the conflict in Ukraine with her family had to leave all her personal belongings behind. Once the family was safe in nearby Slovakia, the young girl was invited to an Operation Christmas Child outreach event. Before the shoebox gifts were distributed, she told the local team that what she wanted more than anything was a pair of sandals. God knew the desire of her heart and provided just what she needed.

## Grateful for a Harmonica

Larry had never received a present of any kind until he was invited to an Operation Christmas Child outreach event. When he opened his shoebox gift, he couldn't believe what was included—a harmonica, the very toy he'd been wanting for a long time. “This is the greatest gift ever,” he said.







## Operation Christmas Child is a ministry of Samaritan's Purse.

Samaritan's Purse is a non-profit, Christian organisation providing emergency relief and development assistance to suffering people around the world. Samaritan's Purse is meeting the physical needs of victims of war, famine, natural disaster, poverty and disease with the aim of demonstrating God's love and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. The aid and assistance are given without regard to the race, creed, gender, religion, or ethnicity of the beneficiaries.

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