

New Haven Register

Serving New Haven, CT

[News](#) > [New Haven](#)

A jump on Christmas: Gift boxes packed for kids worldwide

Published: Monday, November 9, 2009

[No comments posted.](#) | [Email to a friend](#) | [Print version](#) | [ShareThis](#) | [RSS Feeds](#)

By James Tinley, Register Staff



[Click to enlarge](#)

NEW HAVEN — A banquet table brimming with brightly colored toys inside the central corridor of Trinity Lutheran Church was cleared within two hours, with each toy carefully boxed up and bound for children far away.

More than 120 gift-wrapped shoe boxes stuffed full of little toys, art supplies and necessities like toothpaste and soap will soon be heading to children in need all around the world, thanks to a team of 20 volunteers at the church on Orange Street.

“This opens the door for them to new ideas, to new people, to learn about Christ, and to learn people do care,” said volunteer Gail Pederstuen on West Haven. “For me, it’s a lot of fun, and it reaches out to children in need.”

The shoeboxes sent from New Haven will join more than a million others as part of the worldwide humanitarian relief program called Operation Christmas Child. The program is run by Samaritan’s Purse, which is led by Franklin Graham, son of evangelist Billy Graham.

The shoebox of goodies will also come with “the story of Christ” translated into language of the child receiving the box.

Pederstuen knows the memory of receiving certain gifts can stick with a child into adulthood, as she can still recall receiving a violin when she was just 3 or 4.

“You remember gifts that you got as a child. I can just imagine this is a big deal for a lot of children around the world,” she said.

Volunteers, including Monasia Harris, 7, and Ronasia Watts, 9, took great care to match items they chose for each box to an expected recipient.

Monasia filled one box destined for an 8- to 9-year-old girl with a jump rope, a ball, tooth brush and bell.

“This is for someone who doesn’t have stuff,” Monasia said.

When Ronasia filled a box for an 11-year-old boy, she tried to stay away from “girlie colors.”

“I’m picking cars, dinosaurs, anything really that doesn’t say ‘girl,’” she said.

Parishioner Barbara Mourer brought the program to Trinity about 12 years ago when she saw it on television.

“This is going to be our biggest year yet,” she said, as donations have picked up recently with increased notoriety for the program.

The boxes from New Haven will be loaded onto a truck and head to Boon, N.C., where they will be sorted. The sorters in North Carolina will take out anything that can be associated with war or violence or be offensive to the receiving country’s culture. A Barbie doll, for instance, will not be sent to a Muslim country, Pederstuen said.

The boxes will then travel by plane, boat, car and even camel to reach children all over the world, Mourer said.

“Anywhere you can think of,” she said.

Once the boxes are shipped out of the New Haven church, the volunteers’ sights turn immediately to next year’s fund-raising efforts, Mourer said.

James Tinley can be reached at jtinley@nhregister.com or 789-5702.

Reader Comments

The following are comments from the readers. In no way do they represent the view of nhregister.com.

Submit a Comment

We encourage your feedback and dialog and ask you to follow a few simple guidelines when commenting on stories on nhregister.com.

- 1) Please post responsibly.
- 2) Be polite.
- 3) Don't hate.

- 4) If you object to someone's post, use the "Report Abuse" button and we'll review it.
- 5) Users who don't play by the rules will be blocked and won't be allowed to participate.
- 6) Self-promotion of businesses or advertisements of anything for sale are not permitted.

By posting here you agree to abide by our terms and conditions and privacy policy which can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

Name:

Email: (optional)

Comments:

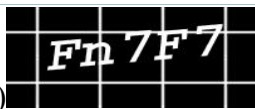


Image Verification: (Case sensitive)

Post Comment