



Serving the
South Loup River Valley

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Operation Christmas Child Packing Party Exceeds Goal of 500 Shoe Boxes



Chloe Coleman (front, facing camera) and sister Anna (behind boxes) and other pre-schoolers joined elementary and high school students in packing shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child in the school auditorium on November 17. Five-hundred-twenty-seven boxes were filled this year - exceeding the goal of 500. (Kevin Neth photo)

By Melody Jennings
Local OCC Chairman

The second Community Shoe box Packing Party for Operation Christmas Child is now history. This year the students at APS had a contest to see which grades could bring the most of the basic, needed hygiene items. K-3 were asked to bring toothbrushes, 4-6 brought toothpaste, 7-8 brought washcloths and 9-12 brought bar soap. The washcloths were the winners (probably because they came in large packages) but the toothbrushes weren't far behind! Thank you to each parent and student who contributed to the contest.

To this writer, this year's project was much like a modern day miracle; a replaying of the multiplying of the loaves and fishes, if you will. Consider that about the cheapest we have ever filled a box is around \$10.00 and we began with \$700.00 in the VBS fund. We should have been able to fill 70 boxes. But as of this writing we filled 527 shoe box gifts and they are on their way in the next leg of the journey.

I stopped in the bank on my way to pick up supplies for the packing party. The ladies at the

bank began giving me money to shop with that day. We have extra special ladies at the bank! Where else but a small town do you go into the bank to make a deposit and walk out with cash in hand?! That scenario has to be repeated many times in order to have the funding to make this party happen and obviously it happened.

Through the help of a couple dozen volunteers who came to help set up the gym on Sunday and then worked at times during the day on Monday, we were ready with all the gifts organized on tables by category and age group. Anyone wanting to pack a box simply began with the first table, chose an age group and either a boy or girl. Then they proceeded around the room to the correct tables where they could choose the items they wanted to pack in their box. The last table contained candy and Beanie Babies from the collection of Melody Coleman's mother, Melva Warren. Melva had collected a great variety and the family shared them with us both last year and this year putting a very special touch on each gift.

The boxes were stacked against the wall and of course,

there were lots of pictures taken. The students got to pack two or more boxes each and seemed to totally enjoy putting together a gift for another child. It is fun to watch the care and deliberation with which some of these children put together their boxes. These gifts go to the poorest children around the world. So far over 113 million gifts have gone to over 150 countries and territories. It is amazing really to be a part of such a huge effort that reaches around the world even from our small village in the middle of Nebraska. None of us knows the horror of living in a refugee camp but we can know that our gifts make a difference in the lives of children wherever they are handed out this year.

If you wanted to be involved but somehow missed it, it is not too late! You can still give money to help pay for the shipping costs (\$7.00 a box) and I know we don't have that much money in our fund. Heather Furne is our treasurer, so you can contact her. Or you can donate online any time. Also, there is still time to go online to Samaritan's Purse and build a shoe box gift there simply by



Holding an Operation Christmas Child shoe box, pre-schooler Claire Kulp gets some help from volunteer Diana Coleman in choosing her girl or boy and age category. (Shavonne Schacher photo)

clicking your mouse on what you want to put in your box. I will tell you, though, it is cheaper to do it in Arnold than online!

And just like the story in the Bible, not only was there enough to fill the 500 boxes we started with - there were leftovers! After discussion about what to do with the items, we decided to donate them at the processing center in Denver so those needed items will go out to children in need this year rather than sitting in a storage room somewhere waiting a year to be used. When Irv and I go out to work in the Processing Center in December we will take the donations along then and see that they are put to good use.

Other than perishables like toothpaste and candy, it's not too early to start shopping for next year's Operation Christmas Child. Every time you see a sale look at the items and think about the shoe box gifts and what you can contribute. If we

all did that throughout the year there wouldn't be a last minute scramble to find enough soap, washcloths, toothbrushes, toothpaste and school supplies. This year we ran out of a few items but three times someone walked in the door with more of what we needed while we were packing! And though it is wonderful to see that happen it is also nerve wracking. So if you plan to donate either money or items next year, please try to do it earlier rather than later. That would help the committee a great deal. We would know better how to spend our funds, if we knew in advance what we had to work with in supplies.

While I am thankful for each person's part in this whole project, I want to be careful to give all the glory and honor to God because it is He who fills our heart with compassion and moves us to work on behalf of those less fortunate than ourselves. Are we going to do it again next year? I don't know...what do you think?

Style Show Raises Money for Theatre Seating



From left, Olivia Furne, Sally Hilderbrant, Margie McDowell, Hannah Powell, Jeanne Staroski and Karla Rockwell, line up after Saturday's style show at the Rialto Theatre, wearing fashions from the store of event sponsor Refined Boutique and Reclaimed Brands of Arnold and North Platte. The style show raised \$150.00 for the theatre's new seating. "There wasn't a big crowd, but the models and everyone there had a great time," said Rialto Theatre Board member Pat Turley. "We want to thank Refined Boutique and everyone who helped make it a success," added Rialto board member Kay Lohmiller. (Sandy Hicks photo)

Residents Have Opportunity To Give to Local Kids at Christmas

This year there will be an opportunity for Arnold and area residents to give Christmas to kids in and around our rural area who may or may not get a Christmas. There will be small Christmas trees in Pinnacle Bank, Mills Hardware, Farmhouse Antiques and Kreative Edge. On each tree there will be ornaments with either a boy or a girl and an age group of a local child. Trees will be placed by December 1.

Please feel free to take one or more ornaments. If you would like to contribute but don't know what to purchase or are maybe unable to shop, please contact Lori at 308-530-4121 and she will find an elf to help or get it done for you. Once you purchase and wrap the packages, please return to the tree where you choose the ornament from by December 22. Then elves will be able to deliver packages for Christmas. If you know of a family with

kids who may be in this situation please contact Lori at 308-530-4121 or Chyrel at 308-520-2479. It is hoped to expand and grow this program in the coming years to follow. Please keep an eye out for more information after the holidays.

Deer Harvested Tops 2013

Shawn Bellew, who operates a deer check station in Arnold, reports that 252 deer were harvested in 2014, compared to 234 last year, and provided a break-down of types of deer harvested: Mule Buck - 135; White Tail Buck - 64; White Tail Doe - 20; Mule Doe - 33.

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Chamber Announces
Christmas Around
Town Events.**