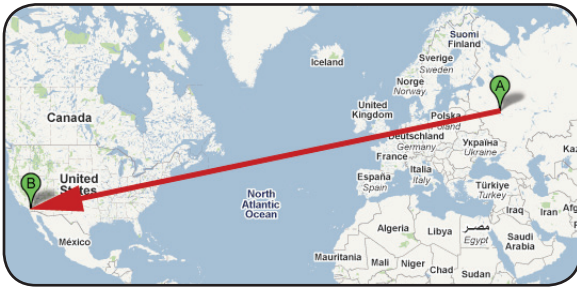




OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD®

A Project of Samaritan's Purse®, Franklin Graham, President

Oksana Nelson: A Simple Gift Changed Her Life



Hope for Others, But Not for Us

My orphanage was in a small village northeast of Moscow, in a poor area of Russia. We didn't have simple luxuries, like windows that closed tightly or hot running water. It was very dull, very dark. It seemed like there was no life in there. We believed there was hope for others, but not for us. We never learned to love or trust each other. But one day that changed—when a simple *shoe box* taught me to trust and hope.

The Power of a Shoe Box Gift

I remember the day people came to my orphanage to deliver shoe box gifts from Operation Christmas Child. We were so excited to have visitors. Love, care and attention were foreign things to me. It was very special to me that the people took their own time to come visit me.

I remember we were all given a box . . . and we were just so excited. Opening the lid of my shoe box gift was overwhelming—it was packed full of items! We started sharing everything until finally we realized it was our own, and we didn't have to share. Looking back, I recognize they were simple items like a toothbrush and toothpaste. But back then, when I had nothing to call my own, each item meant a lot to me. In my box was a pair of socks—the first brand new clothing item I ever owned.

What my heart remembers most is a photo that came in the box. It was a picture of the kids who sent the shoe box gift. The photo was meaningful to me, because I felt like they cared about me even though they didn't know me.

Coming Full Circle

At age 10, I was adopted by a family in the U.S. and moved to California. I have packed shoe box gifts with my family every year since moving to the U.S. In 2009, Operation Christmas Child invited me to participate in a shoe box distribution to poor children in Panama. The kids in Panama were lonely and hopeless, just like I was in my orphanage in Russia. Going to Panama with Operation Christmas Child was like coming full circle.

Looking at the girls, I realized I was the same age when I received my shoe box. I wondered if they were thinking about their future . . . if they realized that the shoe box gift just might change their life completely.

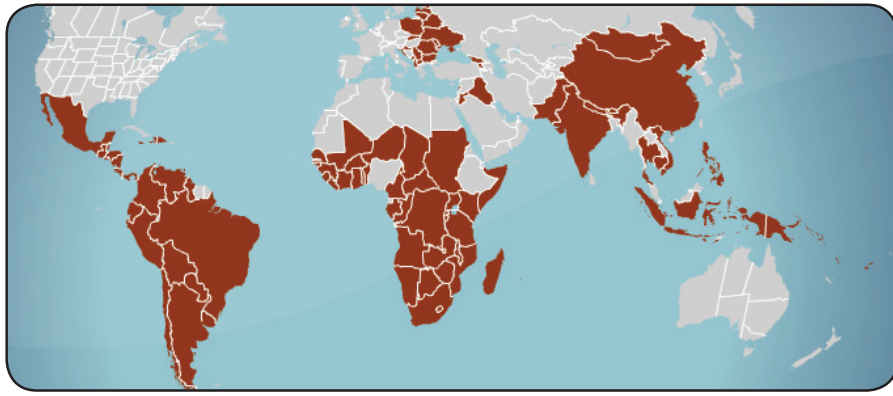
These kids need hope and love just like any other kids in the world. I was so grateful to be a part of giving them joy.

Not Just a Box

One thing I can say with confidence is that a shoe box gift is not just a box. I received a shoe box gift as a hopeless little girl, and it changed my life. One shoe box gift equals one child, equals one life touched forever. The more boxes we can pack and collect, the more children we can reach. That's the power of a shoe box gift.



-more-



Where Do the Shoe Box Gifts Go?

In 2011, Operation Christmas Child hopes to collect and hand-deliver 8.5 million shoe box gifts to children in more than 100 countries, including:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Abkhazia | China | Iraq | Mozambique | Sri Lanka |
| Albania | Colombia | Ivory Coast | Namibia | St. Kitts |
| Angola | Costa Rica | Jordan | Nepal | Sudan (South) |
| Argentina | Dem. Rep. of the Congo | Kazakhstan | Nicaragua | Suriname |
| Bahamas | Dominican Republic | Kenya | Niger | Swaziland |
| Bangladesh | Ecuador | Kosovo | Panama | Tanzania |
| Belarus | Equatorial Guinea | Latvia | Papua New Guinea | Thailand |
| Belize | Estonia | Lebanon | Paraguay | Togo |
| Benin | Ethiopia | Lesotho | Peru | Trinidad |
| Bolivia | Fiji | Liberia | Philippines | Uganda |
| Bosnia/Herzegovina | Gabon | Lithuania | Poland | Ukraine |
| Botswana | Georgia | Macedonia | Republic of the Congo | Uruguay |
| Brazil | Ghana | Madagascar | Romania | Vanuatu |
| Bulgaria | Guatemala | Malawi | Rwanda | Venezuela |
| Burkina Faso | Guinea | Malaysia | Senegal | Vietnam |
| Burundi | Guinea Bissau | Mali | Serbia | Zambia |
| Cambodia | Guyana | Mauritius | Seychelles | Zimbabwe |
| Cameroon | Haiti | Mexico | Sierra Leone | |
| Central African Rep. | Honduras | Moldova | Slovakia | |
| Chad | India | Mongolia | Solomon Islands | |
| Chile | Indonesia | Montenegro | South Africa | |