

Kenya shoe distribution marks last step for 2004 Shoes for Orphan Souls drive_11005

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By Scott Collins

Buckner News Service

NAIROBI, Kenya—Laughter, giggles and a lot of smiles filled the Baptist Children's Center of Nairobi as more than 70 orphan children received brand-new shoes and socks from Buckner Orphan Care International and a team of volunteers.

The Kenya distribution marked the culmination of the 2004 Shoes for Orphan Souls drive that saw Buckner collect more than 165,000 pairs of shoes for needy children around the world. Since taking over the shoe drive in 1999, Buckner has collected and distributed nearly 1.2 million pairs of new shoes.

Shoes and socks collected during the 2004 drive are being distributed to children in more than 40 countries around the world, from the United States to Russia and China.

Buckner
President
Ken Hall
celebrates
giving a new
pair of shoes
to Michael
Ndaka
during the
"Christmas in
Africa"
mission trip.
Hall and a
team of
volunteers
presented
new shoes to
children from
the Baptist
Children's
Center of
Nairobi,
Kenya, as
part of the
2004 'Shoes
for Orphan
Souls'
campaign
sponsored by
Buckner
Orphan Care
International.

Shaun Hawkins, director of SOS, said that while the numbers are staggering and the overall impact of the project continues to grow, the most important part of the annual drive is the impact a new pair of shoes has on an individual child.

"My first experience was here (Kenya) in April putting shoes on a little girl named Betty who had just been at the children's center for a few days, and I could see the difference in her the minute I put the shoes on her feet," Hawkins said. "To come back now and see her as she continues to grow is just amazing."

Hawkins said 2004 was "an incredible year of blessing and hope and excitement, not just for the children who receive the shoes, but for the ministry itself."

And while Buckner has distributed more than 1 million shoes, Hawkins said SOS is continually flooded with requests from orphanages and other ministries around the globe for more shoes.

"We've still got so many new children, even here in Africa alone, so we're not even close to meeting all the needs. There are millions and millions of children who need shoes. It makes a difference."

That difference, she added, "means love. It means someone is going to hug them and touch them. It means that someone cares for them. It means telling them about Jesus, and ultimately that's the greatest love they can receive.

"For every pair of shoes that is received on a child's feet, that's the gospel. It's a pair of Good News, and every child needs that."

With the closure of the 2004 shoe campaign, Hawkins said Buckner already is gearing up for the 2005 drive. She said Buckner needs churches, Sunday school classes, civic groups, schools and others to join the project.

Specific ways to help Shoes for Orphan Souls

- ◆ Donate a new pair of shoes and \$20 for distribution
- ◆ Become a shoe drive coordinator and lead a collection campaign
- ◆ Volunteer to sort shoes for shipment around the world
- ◆ Go on a shoe distribution trip with Buckner and help the children receive the new shoes and socks
- ◆ Become a prayer advocate for Shoes for Orphan Souls

Additional information and resources is available on the internet at www.shoesfororphansouls.org or 1-877-7ORPHAN