

DBU faculty member delivers shoeboxes of joy in Grenada

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DALLAS—Every year before Christmas, students, faculty and staff at Dallas Baptist University collect colorful shoeboxes filled with toys and other gifts for children in developing nations. This spring, the DBU faculty member who coordinates Operation Christmas Child on campus had the opportunity to help deliver some of the presents.

“Shoebox collections started in the DBU Lab School, a campus school for K-6th grade that was once on campus, and spread to the entire campus shortly thereafter,” explained Mark Hale, assistant provost of the Gary Cook School of Leadership at DBU.

“Over the years, DBU has become an official drop-off location, and our campus has collected 69,510 boxes. Next year, we will eclipse the 70,000 box mark. It has become a part of the DBU culture.”

So, when Samaritan’s Purse, the sponsoring organization for Operation Christmas Child, asked Hale if he would like the chance to deliver boxes, he jumped at the opportunity.

Last month, Hale was among a team of about 80 individuals who headed to the small Caribbean island of Grenada. Known as “the Isle of Spice,” it is home both to incredible beaches and economic disparity.

Hale and the Operation Christmas Child team delivered shoeboxes filled with gifts to children in Grenada.



Children in Grenada open shoeboxes filled with gifts, provided through Operation Christmas Child. (Photo / Operation Christmas Child)

“You can imagine the excitement as they all open their boxes at the same moment to see what is inside,” he said. “The kids are all screaming and pulling items out of the boxes and holding them up to show their friends. It’s just like Christmas!”

In one box he helped a child unpack, Hale found a note and photo of a church group.

“It is really neat to see the people that put the box together and their prayers for the child,” he said. “It is sometimes easy to forget that each one of the boxes we pack makes its way into the hands of a child, and that box could have an eternal impact on that individual soul.”

During the trip, the team visited a church that had distributed boxes to children several weeks prior and witnessed how Samaritan’s Purse uses the shoeboxes as an opening to present the gospel and help new believers grow in their faith.

“At one of the events, we observed the follow-up discipleship program called ‘The Greatest Journey.’ The kids were so excited and many in the community had come out to see what all the excitement was about. You can

imagine how the word spread,” he said.

“I have witnessed firsthand the impact these simple shoebox gifts have on the kids. The most important thing is that the shoebox gifts are not the end of the process. These shoebox gifts have a transformational effect on the entire community.”