

DFW gives shoes and shines hope into lives of vulnerable children

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DALLAS—New shoes and a message of hope for vulnerable children united a diverse group of businesses, churches and individuals for the same cause.

[Buckner Shoes for Orphan Souls](#) and WFAA-TV, an ABC affiliate in Dallas, wrapped up a month-long shoe drive Aug. 19. With shoe collection partners across the Dallas-Fort Worth area, they brought in more than 2,000 pairs of shoes that will be given to children in vulnerable situations in North Texas and around the world.

“It was really energizing for us to see different kinds of organizations and churches across DFW come together in this effort,” said Rachel Wallis, director of Buckner Shoes for Orphan Souls.

“When you consider the fact every pair of shoes has the potential to bring hope and help to a child in need, that’s more than 2,000 children that our partners in North Texas will touch here and in communities around the world—just from this drive.”

DFW-based Milestone Electric and Hawaiian Falls used multiple platforms to give, donating ad space on air and collecting shoes on service calls and onsite at the water park locations.

Many individuals took on the cause of the shoe drive, like Natasha Potts of Arlington, who has a special connection to Buckner Shoes for Orphan Souls.

In 1999, as a 9-year-old growing up in a Russian orphanage, Potts said, the pair of shoes she received from Buckner International was one of the first things she ever owned. Later, a Dallas-area couple adopted Natasha and her brother through Buckner, and they joined their forever family. She remembers wearing her Buckner shoes home as they flew to the United States.

“I decided to help with the DFW shoe drive because it’s part of my story,” she said. “This was one way I could give back to something so dear to me and show that a simple pair of shoes can change a child’s life.”

She set up shoe collection boxes and promoted the drive at her workplace.

“The most rewarding part was when my coworkers and our patients got to participate in the shoe drive,” she said. “They were so thrilled to do it and were so excited to know someone who had already benefited from a pair of shoes through this program. It brought me joy to see people donating because they saw my story, and they wanted to make a difference.”

The Buckner Shoes for Orphan Souls team already is planning for the next regional shoe drive, Wallis said.

“We’re looking forward to seeing this drive accomplish even more next year,” she said.