

# Stockings stuffed by Valley Baptist volunteers bring Christmas joy to children on the border

December 15, 2008

MISSION—For the past 20 years, Edweina Peroni and volunteers from across the nation have been giving meaning to Christmas for thousands of children along the Texas-Mexico border and deep into Mexico.

In the past two decades, they have put together more than 200,000 Christmas stockings for children. Each stocking is prayed over and contains four toys. Stockings for boys include six crayons and six marbles. Stockings for girls include six crayons and a doll. Each stocking has a pamphlet that tells the story of Christ's birth.

Edwein Peroni of Mission leads the stocking stuffer ministry.

For most of the children, these are the only Christmas presents they will receive. And for many of them, this is the first time they learn Jesus' birth is the reason for the holiday.

The stockings have done far more than brighten a child's Christmas, said Peroni, a member of Christ the King Baptist Church in Mission. They've opened avenues for churches to share the hope of Christ. She's heard stories of families coming to faith as a result of the stocking outreach.

"I'm hearing more and more about the doors that are being opened," said Peroni, who serves as the cook for Valley Baptist Retreat Center in Mission.

This year alone, volunteers will put together and send out more than 15,000 stockings.

And the blessings that come with each stocking don't stop at one recipient, Peroni said as she sat in her house, which is filled with thousands of stockings that will be delivered this month. Children discover the joy that comes with giving.

"You give six marbles and six colors to them, and they give three marbles and three colors to someone else," she said.

*For more information on how to get involved in the effort, contact Peroni at (956) 581-6299.*