U.S. RESIDENTS USE SHOEBOX GIFTS TO SEND HOPE TO CHILDREN IN NEED

U.S. families are making a difference around the world by volunteering with the largest Christmas project of its kind, Operation Christmas Child. This Samaritan's Purse project is a year-round effort that impacts millions of children in need.

Throughout the year, U.S. volunteers are transforming empty shoeboxes into gifts of hope filled with fun toys, school supplies and hygiene items. Gifts are collected during National Collection Week, Nov. 13 – 20, when nearly 5,000 drop-off locations across the nation will be open to receive shoebox gifts. Operation Christmas Child delivers these gifts to children affected by war, disease, disaster, poverty and famine.

"Operation Christmas Child is able to reach millions of children each year because of the year-round efforts and generosity of volunteers," said Randy Riddle, domestic director for Operation Christmas Child. "Reaching more than 12 million children with gifts of hope requires a massive, year-round effort. We are so grateful for the volunteers who give their time and resources to show God's love through this life-changing project."

U.S. residents can join the effort to reach the 2017 global goal of reaching 12 million children.

Participants can donate $9 per shoebox gift online through "Follow Your Box" and receive a tracking label to discover its destination.

Shoeboxes can be packed and sent year-round to Samaritan's Purse headquarters at 801 Bamboo Road, Boone, NC 28607. Those who prefer the convenience of online shopping can browse samaritanspurse.org/buildonline to select gifts matched to a child's specific age and gender, then finish packing the virtual shoebox by adding a photo and personal note of encouragement.

To learn more about year-round volunteer opportunities with Operation Christmas Child, visit samaritanspurse.org/occ.

Operation Christmas Child is a project of Samaritan's Purse, an international Christian relief and evangelism organization headed by Franklin Graham. The mission of Operation Christmas Child is to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way to children in need around the world and, together with the local church worldwide, to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has collected and delivered more than 146 million gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 160 countries and territories.

MEDIA NOTE: For complete media materials including high-resolution, downloadable photos, visit samaritanspurse.org/occnewsroom.