

Seasons Greetings,

We can't quite believe that our first year as co-directors of Spirit Lake Ministry has come and gone so quickly. Shoebox Christmas 2023 was a huge success; and it is only because of all the individuals, groups, and churches that we were able to distribute over 5,000 boxes to children in North Dakota and Minnesota. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to reach additional children throughout the year, and wish that all of you had the opportunity to help deliver these gifts of hope to the schools, and daycares, and districts to see the joy they bring.

As we prepare for Shoebox Christmas 2024, we anticipate that the outpouring of generosity from our communities and churches will provide us the ability to reach over 6,000 children with Christmas shoeboxes. With such a large number of shoeboxes coming our way, we need all donors to please read through the entire letter and follow our recommendations of items that should (and shouldn't) be put into the boxes. By assuring that only the correct items are in the box, it will lessen the hours spent by our volunteers helping us go through them.

To ensure that all children experience a joy-filled Christmas, we work with our volunteers to check each box to assure it is 1) age appropriate, and 2) that it has some of the standard items that the kids always look forward to, such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, hats, and gloves. To be able to do this for thousands of boxes, we have several groups who help us along the way – home school groups, special education classes, members of the community, and, of course, any family member who dares to visit us during this time! We could not do this work without their help, and we appreciate your cooperation in helping make their efforts easier.

Regular shoeboxes, decorative shoeboxes, or clear, shoebox-sized boxes are acceptable. If you use regular shoeboxes, we request that you wrap the bottom box and the top lid separately in festive paper, and then place a rubber band around it. Operation Christmas Child boxes **cannot** be used. We also ask that you place a piece of paper on the outside of the box identifying the age range and gender of the intended recipient so that we can distribute them easily. We are hoping to have shoeboxes available for each of the following age groups: infant, toddler, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, 13 and up. Please make sure to only add **new** toys, **new** age and subject-appropriate books, and please **do not** add any clothing into the boxes, except hats, gloves, or mittens.

We look forward to receiving your shoeboxes anytime after September 1st, but no later than November 15th. We ask that IF you ship your boxes, you email us at slministry@hotmail.com so that we know they are on the way. Shoeboxes can be mailed to:

3365 81st Ave NE
Sheyenne, ND 58374

Additionally, if you have members of your church or community who would like to send necessities outside of the Christmas Shoebox program's focus, we encourage them to do so. Items like soaps, deodorants, shampoos, feminine hygiene products, washcloths, razors, shaving cream, etc. are always in need. Your generosity makes a tremendous difference in our community.

We are blessed by your generosity and support, and look forward to another rewarding Shoebox Christmas, and a meaningful second year of ministry together.

Kim and Paulette Paulson
Co-Directors, Spirit Lake Ministry

