

## **Mission Tuesday #94 - Christmas Baskets**

Merry Christmas!

I'm writing this Christmas morning, as I'm awaiting our children to wake up and emerge from their bedrooms. Many thoughts are running through my mind this morning as my husband Bill and I wait. What a blessed day Christmas day is!

My mind turns to my Mission of Hope friends. Many of them are having a special Christmas this year due to the blessings of our annual Christmas Basket Giveaway & Party at Mission of Hope which was held this past Wednesday. With the help of many donors, volunteers, churches, businesses, and Kurt Warner's First Things First Foundation, our Giveaway & Party was a HUGE success!

We were blessed by many people getting involved this year! Friends from all over donated new toys, hats, gloves, scarves and coats, or money for us to purchase them. My sister-in-law, Stacie donated over 100 Zhu-Zhu pets from the Zhu Zhu Pets 10,000 Smiles Campaign. Kurt Warner's foundation donated new Columbia coats for both children and adults. Local businesses, friends and churches donated food items either for the lunch or for the food baskets.

Volunteers gathered at 8am Wednesday morning to begin assembling the 225 food baskets...filled with a ham, potatoes, canned corn and beans, dinner rolls, butter, milk, fresh fruit, candy and a pumpkin pie. Some volunteers were in the kitchen baking cookies. Others were making lunch for the volunteers and for our friends who would be coming to the Giveaway & Party, which was to begin at 1pm. Still others were sorting toys, coats, hats, gloves and clothing. Despite a couple bumps in the road, everything ran so smoothly...what sights to take in...everyone working together with the common goal to serve God and to bless those would be coming through the doors in just a few hours.

Before 12:15 the line was forming already outside the Mission's front door. Once the doors opened at 1:00, the excitement began. Each person who was pre-registered to pick up a food basket was escorted into the sanctuary area, picked up his or her food basket, was able to choose a coat or another outerwear item of their choice for a member of their family, and was able to pick out a toy for each of his or her children. It was wonderful to see smiles full of hope and joy as each one was treated so special. Many "Merry Christmas" wishes were heard throughout the building. :) It was wonderful!

Each person who came in was invited to have lunch with us...sloppy joes, chips, baked beans, and fresh-baked cookies. We fed over 200 people lunch that day...all done by volunteers!

Combining the 225 people who pre-registered for and received the food baskets, the family members of those 225, the people who came in to Mission of Hope to have lunch, and those who gave of their time and donations...many, many people were touched by God's amazing love through this Giveaway & Party. God's presence was again at Mission of Hope!

I took many pictures of the day. I hope you are able to get a glimpse of what a special day it really was on Wednesday through the ones I picked out below.

To God be the glory!



Wrapping the food baskets



Volunteers (some from Kurt Warner's family) assembling food baskets



Measuring the cellophane to wrap the baskets



Wrapping the food baskets



Organizing the toy area



Jenny and Shannon baking cookies



Ali and Zach with their cousins Neil and Morgan helping in the kitchen



Denise, Theresa and Chris



More assembling baskets...



And more wrapping...



Pumpkin pies being put in the food baskets



Wow...225 baskets!



The first basket recipients come through



Lots of smiling faces!



Coats, hats, scarves...



Lisa helping at the hat/scarf/mitten table



Some of our wonderful volunteers!



Many waiting patiently for their basket



Stacie, Jeanie and Kimmie help people pick out toys for their children