



NHS Service Project: Operation Christmas Child

On November 25th, the eight seniors in the National Honor Society (NHS) at Liberty Christian Academy East participated in a heartwarming and impactful service project supporting Operation Christmas Child. This initiative, led by Samaritan's Purse, aims to bring joy and hope to children in need worldwide by sending shoeboxes filled with gifts, toys, and essential items. Our team spent the day at New Song Community Church in

Etna, Ohio, working alongside other volunteers to prepare thousands of shoeboxes for shipping.

The day began early at 8:30 AM when we arrived at the school, eager and ready to serve. For the next hour, we loaded 855 shoeboxes our school collected into our cars, ensuring everything was carefully packed and ready for transportation. These boxes, packed with gifts for children of all ages, had been collected through donations and classroom packing parties and were destined for children in countries all over the world. With everything loaded, we headed to the New Song Community Church, where the other volunteers greeted us and began the process of unloading the boxes.

Unloading the cars took about an hour, but we were focused and efficient, working as a team to move the boxes into the church. Once everything was inside, we took a moment to pray over the shoeboxes and our group, asking for God's blessings on the children who would receive these gifts and for guidance as we continued our work. With the prayer complete, we dove into the task at hand. Our first responsibility was to go through each shoebox, ensuring it was packed with enough items and verifying that each box had the correct shipping label filled out properly. This process was crucial because every box had to meet specific guidelines to ensure it reached the right child in the right condition.

After verifying the boxes, we divided into smaller teams. Half of us worked on packing the large shipping containers, which each needed to hold 16 shoeboxes. The rest of the group was split into two teams. One team went through the shoeboxes to add items to those underfilled, ensuring that every box met the required standards. The other team began the process of loading up the semi-truck that would carry the shipping containers to Charleston, where they would be further sorted and shipped overseas.

As the day wore on, our work became more and more focused. We spent hours carefully packing the shipping boxes, ensuring that each container had exactly 16 shoeboxes, sealing them securely, and then moving the boxes onto pallets. These pallets were then taken out to the semi-truck, where another team worked to load them. Our teamwork was essential to keep everything running smoothly, and it was a powerful experience to see how everyone worked together towards a common goal.

Once we finished processing our 855 shoeboxes we had brought with us, we turned our attention to the remaining boxes from other schools and churches. The incoming drop-offs were steady throughout the day, and we eagerly assisted in sorting and packing those as well. It was a long day, but we were energized by the thought of the difference these boxes would make for children who may not otherwise have received a gift this Christmas.

Around noon, we took a break for lunch provided by the New Song Community Church and came together for another prayer. We thanked God for the opportunity to serve and for the progress we had made so far. After lunch, it was time to get back to work. Our focus shifted to packing extra supplies for hurricane relief efforts. This involved organizing items that would be shipped to areas affected by recent storms.

Later in the afternoon, we moved outside for the next major task: the massive expected delivery of 315 shipping boxes, each filled with roughly 16 shoeboxes for a total of more than 5,000 shoeboxes. This delivery was a crucial part of the day, and we worked as a group to unload the boxes from a U-Haul truck and carefully transfer them to the semi-truck. It was an intense but rewarding job, as we carefully levelled the boxes and ensured each one was labelled with the correct number. After about 1.5 hours of hard work, we completed the task, just in time to help with the final shipment of 36 boxes.

As the clock approached 3:30 PM, we had completed our part in preparing the boxes for shipment. We had spent the day packing, sorting, and organizing thousands of shoeboxes, and we were proud of what we had accomplished. Not only had we made a tangible impact in the lives of children in need, but we had also experienced firsthand the power of teamwork, prayer, and service.

This NHS service project was a perfect example of the value of giving back to our community and the world. It was a day full of hard work and collaboration, and it was deeply moving to know that the shoeboxes we helped pack would bring smiles and hope to children across the globe this holiday season. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve and look forward to participating in more projects like this in the future.