

## OPERATION SCHOOL BELL – September & October 2022

Our Operation School Bell® program completed one of its most successful events ever! Over a period of 10 days in September and October, we were able to clothe over 1,000 children from kindergarten through high school in North County school districts at Kohl's in San Marcos and Poway. Kohl's has been our community partner for the last eight years and helps us bring joy and hope to our community youth.



This herculean effort was possible only with the efforts of 48 volunteers logging in over 1000 hours, and the financial support of our generous donors and friends. Due to budget constraints, we did not support as many students as we have in the past, but with the continued help from our generous donors, we will raise those numbers. Our goal is to give these children a sense of confidence and dignity that a new pair of shoes means for them. Those feelings spill over into better attention and ultimately, better performance in school. Beyond the big

picture, our volunteers experienced numerous moments of interaction with these families, listening to their stories and their hopes, for themselves and their children.

A family with three children was very thankful for new shoes! Mother said this was the first NEW shoes the children ever had since they usually got hand-me-downs and shoes that didn't fit. They were so excited to get shoes that light up too! It reminded us of a family with two young boys who came to the school shopping event a couple of years ago. Previously, the boys would take turns going to school because they had only one pair of shoes between them. WE SPREAD JOY!

A foster high school student picked out a simple black dress and shoes for chorus performances at school. She was thrilled to be able to sing with her friends since she could not afford the appropriate attire for performances. Music is her passion and her future! WE OFFER HOPE!

Two brothers, in grades 4 and 5, were so excited to have new hoodies that they wanted to wear them out of the store in 90+ degree weather! They were beaming with CONFIDENCE as they admired each other in their new clothes.

This year, we were privileged to serve several Ukrainian refugee families and some of them wanted to talk about their recent journey. One family consisted of grandparents taking care of three children because their parents were still in Ukraine fighting for their country. Another family was so grateful that the father, who spoke almost no English, as he was going out the door, looked back and said "Thank you, America!" WE HAVE WITNESSED COURAGE!

Our goal for the next year is to double the number of children we serve, and we cannot do that without your help. Please donate at the bottom of this Page or remember us on Giving Tuesday, November 29. The children count on us and we must count on you!