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# Upcoming Operation Christmas Child Packing Parties

OCTOBER 14TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

## Upcoming Operation Christmas Child Packing Parties

*Written by*

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**Bloomfield, Missouri** - Operation Christmas Child (OCC) is an organization that sends shoeboxes full of small gifts to second and third world countries around the globe. Although this organization stretches across all of America, Stoddard County has been a major participant throughout the last few years. Many churches, small organizations, and school clubs have taken part in packing shoe boxes.

Operation Christmas Child works through Samaritan's Purse, a foundation that is dedicated to international relief. OCC is more than just a box full of small toys that are bought at the Dollar Store. For most kids that receive boxes, it will be their only Christmas present. OCC is also dedicated to showing children their world in a difference perspective: Jesus' perspective. Each box will contain a small Bible or short books about Bible stories that are written in the child's native language so that they will receive the light and love of Jesus.

Many churches throughout Bloomfield and Dexter will soon be holding 'Packing Parties', which is when the members of the church pull together and fill boxes with small items that may be necessities for the child or they will fill the box with smaller toys such as stuffed animals or crayons and coloring books. Many of the shoeboxes are filled with personal hygiene items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, wash cloths, bars of soap, shoes, shirts, socks, and other useful things that the child would need for their day to day life.

Other gifts such as small toys, books, crayons, pencils, notebooks, and other things are also welcomed so that the child will have some form of entertainment.

OCC began in 1993 and they are thrilled to be celebrating their twentieth year this year! Last year, they had the joy of sending out their 100-millionth shoebox. This year will also be filled with great excitement because each year the boxes that are sent overseas are increased dramatically, so this time of year is always exciting for everyone involved in the program. Over one million children have received shoe boxes within the past nineteen years, so it is exciting to keep that trend going during the Christmas season.

Living Water Worship Center in Bloomfield and St. Joe General Baptist Church in Idalia has participated in this event for many years. Both of these churches, including many other churches in the Bloomfield and Dexter area will be collecting items for their OCC boxes. Packing Parties will be held in early to mid-November, so be sure to pick up supplies and pack a box!

The Light House Church in Dexter has the honor of being a drop-off site, where people in the surrounding area will drop their packed boxes there so they can be distributed to a bigger packing plant in Atlanta or New York City so that they can be shipped to other places in the world. This will be the Light House's fifth year of participating in OCC and they have sent hundreds of boxes during that time. You can pack your own personal box and drop it off at the Light House. For more information on how to pack a box or what to include, visit [samaritanspurse.org](http://samaritanspurse.org).

It costs \$7 to send each shoebox so many donations and hard work is required to send a large amount but any participator will agree that it is worth it. People in this area have really stepped up and reached out and the number of boxes sent each year has increased tremendously. Stoddard County is filled with people that have great compassion for charities and the astounding results of Operation Christmas Child has really proved that.

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