



**WCLN Community Update**  
**Operation Christmas Child**  
**October 16, 2023**

**Dan DeBruler (00:00:01)** - Well, it's so good to be with Nicole Nelson. Nicole, it's been a little while since we have seen one another, but I'm glad that you're here. I'm glad that we can talk with smiles on our faces about Operation Christmas Child. It's such a big deal every single year, and we look forward to the people in the, ah, surrounding counties really reaching out to the world, which is what's happening, right?

**Nicole Nelson (00:00:23)** - Yeah, I am I'm excited to be back and excited to share just what the Ministry has been able to do. Last year, we had our 250th millionth shoebox delivered to the Ukraine. Um, and this year our area is looking to, you know, you start with zero boxes every year. And so for every team to grow to thousands and thousands of shoeboxes, it's just an amazing effort and just an amazing opportunity to share the gospel.

**Dan DeBruler (00:00:48)** - You know, we were talking a few moments ago and you shared something with me that that should have stricken me as odd, but then you explained it away.

**Dan DeBruler (00:00:57)** - And it's the goal. You know, your your your goal in numbers has actually gone down this year.

**Nicole Nelson (00:01:04)** - Yeah. So if you have been following us for a while in Cumberland County and you'll know that we started out as a six county team, and then we actually went to a four county team, um, with a multiplication three years ago. And then as of this year, we have two counties, um, which is one less than last year. So although we did almost 32,000 last year, our goal is 22,000 this year.

**Dan DeBruler (00:01:29)** - Now globally. What does that equate to? I mean, what's the goal on a global scale? How many kids are we hoping to reach?

**Nicole Nelson (00:01:37)** - Millions. And our goal in the Carolinas just for North and South Carolina is 1 million shoeboxes in just our two states. And so globally, we're looking at about 12 million shoeboxes. And so with every shoebox, we're told after they're invited to the greatest journey, which is the discipleship program afterwards, that they're told to go out and evangelize and go out and tell others.

**Nicole Nelson (00:02:01)** - And so we're seeing that return, right? For every shoebox they're going to tell, they're told to tell ten people about Jesus. And so the return we're seeing is about three salvations for every box that goes out. And so our 12 million is going to turn into 36 million real quick.

**Dan DeBruler (00:02:18)** - And see, that's the big deal of it all. There are people who who don't know. I mean, for for those who do know about Operation Christmas Child, about Samaritan's Purse and all that they do in the world, um, they're they're aware of what happens. But explain kind of the concept of Samaritan's Purse. I mean, you opened up the box. Let's go. Let's dig a little deeper in the box about why Operation Christmas Child?



**Nicole Nelson (00:02:41)** - Yeah. So it started in the 90s, um, 93, specifically during the Bosnia conflict. Um, Franklin Graham. I'm sorry. Billy Graham just saw a great need in refugee camps and just wanted to collect gifts, um, boxes for them to receive of just simple hygiene items and toys to entertain the kids in the camps, and just to be able to get simple necessities.

**Nicole Nelson (00:03:03)** - And what turned into such an amazing project of so many people willing to make these boxes for children. We've never seen children that are in need, that it just started the project and so it's grown since then. Um, with just getting a simple box, you can buy the box, you can get a shoebox from home, deciding boy or girl, deciding what age. If you want to start as low as two years old and go all the way up to 14, and so you can be giving them toys and school supplies and hygiene items for those little kids. It's the first time they've held a doll or a stuffed animal. For the older kids, you could be giving them sewing kits or toolkits that give them a trade, or giving them pencils could be the very first time they're allowed to go to school. And then at the end of the presentation, they're they're learning about Jesus for the first time, and they're invited back for a discipleship program. And during those 12 weeks of training, we're turning them.

**Nicole Nelson (00:03:58)** - We're giving them the knowledge of Jesus and the life of his ministry. And then how to be disciple makers. And so these communities are turning into communities that start churches and start spreading the gospel to unreached people groups. There are 170 known countries that were delivering to this year. And that's just to say that there are countries that we deliver to that we do not publicize about, but those 170, these are countries that have never heard the gospel and they wouldn't hear it other than receiving this special gift.

**Dan DeBruler (00:04:31)** - Now, I've seen friends wearing bikers with boxes, shirts and I. We actually visited the Freedom Biker Church in Fayetteville a few weeks ago on a on a Sunday. I didn't have anything else to do in my own church, so we visited them and they were talking about it too. And they're talking about riding up to the Billy Graham or to the Collection Center in Charlotte. And I think that's this weekend. And you call this National Collection Week. What does that mean for everybody?

**Nicole Nelson (00:04:58)** - So National Collection Week and we collect these shoeboxes.

**Nicole Nelson (00:05:00)** - Is the week before Thanksgiving. And so this is really just to get us in the the spirit. This is about the time that Americans start planning for Christmas. Right. And so we collect these shoeboxes the week before and it's November the 13th through the 20th.

**Dan DeBruler (00:05:17)** - And what happens, I mean do is that when the the churches who are collecting boxes locally, they deliver them somewhere. Is that is that what's happening there?

**Nicole Nelson (00:05:27)** - Yes. So you can bring your shoeboxes to your own church. But what they do is they go to what's called Drop-Off locations. And so you can go to Samaritan's Purse, org slash Assisi and go to our locator. You just put in your zip code and it'll tell you the closest locations to you. But most importantly, my favorite thing is what hours they are open. So then they can receive the shoeboxes here in Cumberland County, it's at Fremont Baptist at three, six, six three Cumberland County Road and then also at Northwood Temple. And that's off of Ramsey Road at 4250.



**Dan DeBruler** (00:06:03) - Okay. Now this week there's actually something really cool happening at Northwood Temple. Tell us about that.

**Nicole Nelson** (00:06:08) - Yeah. So we have a Bureau of Full Circle speakers. And these are adults that received shoeboxes as a child and have come now to the US for college or adoption or different trades, and they now work for the ministry. And so we're going to have the privilege of having Zach here from Fiji on Friday. And Northwood Temple has been gracious enough to open this to the entire community. And so you can come to Northwood Temple, um, at 400 250 Ramsey Street at 9 a.m. on Friday to hear Zach's story, his incredible testimony, and then be able to meet him afterwards.

**Dan DeBruler** (00:06:45) - Yeah, and that is a great opportunity. And hopefully people will take us up on that, because it would be nice to see how that all comes about, what all happens as a result of us simply packing a shoebox with a few items and a lot of love. So thank you again for being here. Look forward to hearing some great reports and maybe being part of one of the collection days, and we'll see you there.

**Nicole Nelson** (00:07:08) - Absolutely. Thank you so much for having me. Thank you.