



Beyond the Box

Update Report: December 2020

A Season of Hope

The month of December marked our fourth visit to the families we had committed to back in September. Our relationships with the children and families developed during this time, making our monthly visits look more like friendly family visits than formal ones.

Now, mutual trust between our team and the families is evident. Conversations are more profound and personal, many of which center around God and His provision and love. Numerous families have expressed their gratitude by using the materials and exercises given in the boxes in previous months. We have also witnessed promising ties between some of the families with our local partner churches.

It has been such a privilege to demonstrate God's love through these visits. This project would not have been possible without your partnership and support. Thank you!

Joyful Christmas

As we made our way up the stairs to our visit, it was apparent to our eyes that the building had witnessed its share of calamities. Years of civil war, bullet holes, and the recent Beirut blast left their mark on the walls, stairs, and windows. **Nothing seemed to suggest that this was the Joyful Christmas Season.** Even as we entered the house, we could not see any Christmas tree, decoration, lights, or ornaments. All that was in that little room (which was the entire house) were empty walls, a tv set, two sofa beds, and a small table.



Three minutes into our visit, the conversation turned to the love of God and how He manifested His love through Jesus. While the children were busy discovering the boxes' content with all the different items, both parents were in an in-depth discussion with our team members. Some of the questions the parents were asking were, ***"How could God love us this way?" "Why would Jesus leave heaven to die for us?"*** Such questions open the door for our team to share the Gospel message and shed light on the mystery that the Christmas season is all about.

Perhaps on that day, eyes could not notice that it was Christmas, but every heart in that room could certainly feel it.

More than a Box

This month, our team designed the boxes' inner part in a way that would turn into a Christmas tree with the nativity scene. Our different monthly boxes have become a family activity for all to participate and join. The activity sheet also included a skit that walks children through the Christmas story using the nativity scene's characters. Who said that boxes are only useful to put things in?



250 Boxes Distributed



163 Families Visted



From the Field

One of the families we are serving has three little girls all within the same age range. During our monthly visit to them in early December, they shared with us how their parents decided that they would not get a Christmas tree this year. Economic pressures had taken their toll on this family, and now they find themselves barely meeting their basic needs of survival.

Little did these three girls know that the boxes they carried in their hands can turn into a Christmas tree and nativity scene. The excitement in their eyes and their parents' eyes said it all. At that moment, this family realized that they would not have one Christmas tree in their home this year but three!

More importantly, it was an opportunity for our team to remind the family why we actually celebrate Christmas and what it means to them personally. Why was it necessary for Jesus to come to this Earth, live with us, die for us, and rise from the dead? Before leaving, we asked the girls what they were thankful for, and then everyone united in prayer, giving praise and worship to the Lord.

We praise God for granting us access to the lives of families we never knew before. We are thankful for all the relationships built and pray that God will continue to bless and use the "Beyond the Box" project to touch the hearts of families in need.



Trauma Sessions

We started running trauma sessions for children affected by the August explosion. The experience of that day left kids with many unanswered questions. Not understanding why this happened leaves them filled with fear and anxiety that every loud noise is another explosion. **Many children relive the experience of the explosion over and over again, trying to make sense of what happened.** All this leaves them with PTSD symptoms visible in the behavior and reaction to the environment around them.

Sessions are 45-minutes in length and arranged separately from the monthly visits. A specialist runs the session at the child's home and in the presence of their parents.

This Month Please Pray

- For guidance, strength, and energy as we continue our visits to the families.
- That God would lead us to new families in need of this program, in Beirut and other areas of Lebanon.
- For God to give psychological healing to all the children attending our trauma sessions.
- For strong partnerships with the local churches as we link families to healthy communities of faith.
- That relationship will be cultivated between the families visited and our local partner churches.
- That this project will not be affected by the lockdown scheduled in January.

We appreciate your continued prayers and support!

Please help us reach more children.

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