

FIRST LADY'S MESSAGE

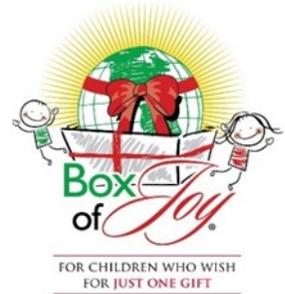
BRINGING "JOY" TO A CHILD COMES IN A SMALL BOX

First Lady By: Mary Jane Grauso



Just imagine yourself growing up in a rural village in one of the poorest countries like Guatemala. Most villages lack clean water and modern sanitation facilities [things we take for granted]. Your parents either work farming the land, in which, case they can barely provide you with the clothes on your back and a small portion of food to nourish you; or they are unemployed [40% of the population is at or below poverty level].

Enter Sandy Pino, Sr. Director of Cross Catholic who gave a presentation about these existing conditions at the mid-year MD State Council meeting in January 2018. She introduced the Knights to the "BOX OF JOY" concept. At the end of the presentation she invited the State Deputy Steve Cohen and his wife Vicki along with the State Secretary Dale Trott and his wife Linda to go with her and see what Cross Catholic was doing in Guatemala. They embarked on their trip in February 2018 and witnessed the dire conditions that children were living under and how



one small box filled with age appropriate items brought a HUGE smile to each child's face when they distributed the "Boxes of Joy" the only gift that the child would receive. The rest is history as they say. The MD State Council has been doing "Boxes of Joy" ever since.

Pope Francis has given his Apostolic Blessing to Cross Catholic Outreach in honor of its 20th anniversary of its global Catholic ministry. Cross Catholic currently works with bishops, priests, religious and lay workers to provide **food, water, housing, education, orphan support, medical care, microenterprise and disaster relief** — and the love of our Lord Jesus Christ — to the poorest of the poor in over 30 countries around the world.

Recently, at our fall meeting Oct 22-23, everyone in attendance Friday evening helped to fold and put together boxes so that the following morning the ladies who donated a multitude of items started to fill each box to their brim. A total of 123 "Boxes of Joy" were filled [a list of acceptable items is posted on the K of C website].



I would like to thank Linda Trott for bringing a large donation of toothbrushes and toothpaste, Jody Hershberger for bringing a large donation from Staples and to all of the ladies that donated a multitude of items and participated on Saturday in filling the boxes. To date 45 local councils and 5000 boxes have been filled and sent to Cross Catholic from the state of Maryland. Thank you to all who participated.

Although it is the end of the year, you might consider doing a "Box of Joy" project sometime next year. This would be a great project for both girl scout and/or boy scout troops to take up, it could also be a gold award [girl scout] or eagle scout award [boy scout], as a community service project for high school students, a project for parishes, ladies auxiliaries, Knights of Columbus councils, etc. It's a terrific humanitarian project that allows us to reach out to some of the poorest children in the world that puts a smile on their faces.

If interested, please contact the Box of Joy Chairman Alex Lopez-Bueno email: alex.lopez.bueno@gmail.com. Remember, the State Deputy's motto is "We are servant Leaders" what better way to serve others than by participating in the "Box of Joy" program.

Thank you to every participant. God Bless,

Mary Jane

