

'Sew on Fire' with global gifts of joy and love

Flowers arrived from unlikely places, including Brazil, and Wawa, Ontario, in celebration of Burlington-based Sew on Fire Ministries' sixth anniversary on Monday, February 6th. Sew on Fire is like a year-round Santa's workshop, having shipped more than 70,000 care packages to widows, orphans, school children, the homeless, and others in need in 72 nations, among them the West Bank, Sierra Leone, Tibet, and oddly – New York.

The care packages, in the form of drawstring bags, contain basic personal hygiene items, school supplies, sweet treats, layettes for newborns, toques and mittens, or any combination of items depending on the need.

Wendy Hagar, founder of Sew on Fire, hosted the celebration at the ministry's Harrington

Sarah Hagar with children in Nepal

Court warehouse space donated by Crossroads Christian Communications. "We're here to honour Wendy, and her servant's heart," said Crossroad's vice president Reynold Mainse to an audience of 35 guests and volunteers, all of whom had up until that moment been busy forming assembly lines to fill bags, and pack and move boxes.

Mr. Mainse spoke of Crossroad's appreciation of Sew on Fire. "Looking at this board," he said, pointing to a looming seven foot, white memo board crowded with names of countries and listings of projects completed and pending, "it's a worthwhile ministry."

Volunteers are continually working on as many as six projects at a time. At Christmas the Philip Aziz Centre for AIDS and cancer patients in Toronto received 30 bags valued at \$100 each, and 400 of Toronto's homeless received white toques with Calgary Olympics logos. Currently bags are being prepared for Brazil, India, and Dominican Republic.

"This is a ministry that is 100 percent run by volunteers. There are no paid staff," said Wendy, "and that's rare. Right now we're putting together 1,400 bags for the Philippines."

The ministry relies on contributions. People love to volunteer, and as many as 100 volunteer groups from across Canada knit, sew and contribute. An Edmonton group alone has sent out 7,000 bags. Locally, schools, Brownie packs, kids clubs, women's groups and church groups volunteer days and evenings at the warehouse. Companies, such as Wrethters, Colgate, Trebor Allen and Irwin Toys donate skids of their products. A local shoe company contributed \$30,000 in shoes. Even the Canadian Air Force has been involved. Three years ago they volunteered to fly 6,000 bags to orphans in Guatemala.

"Our message is very clear," read Wendy's words on her website, www.sewonfire.com. "People helping people, sending the love of God in a tangible form as humanitarian aid to a hurting world."

Anyone wishing more information or interested in volunteering with Sew on Fire Ministries can contact Wendy Hagar by email at info@sewonfire.com or by calling 905-333-5722.



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