



ONE OF THE FIRST KIDS TO RECEIVE A SHOE BOX GIFT IS NOW REACHING OUT TO HELP OTHER HURTING CHILDREN

Lejla will share her story at First Baptist Church of Winona

WINONA, MS, July 20, 2008-Lejla Allison's happy childhood was turned upside down when ethnic violence erupted in Bosnia in the 1990s. The once peaceful rolling green hills that surrounded her village of Dubrave were filled with gunfire and hidden landmines. Hunger, fear, and misery consumed her life.

But Lejla and her family were not forgotten. At 11 years old, she was among the first group of children to receive gift-filled shoe boxes when Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse, was launched in 1993 in Bosnia. Lejla remembers how much hope the colorfully-wrapped shoe box gift with candy, pencils and sneakers gave her.

"I truly felt blessed. I knew that God had answered my prayers," Lejla said. "I was so overwhelmed I started to cry. But these were not the tears I was used to crying. This time they were tears of joy. This time I knew it was worthwhile to keep on living."


In 2000, Lejla married an American who was working with NATO on a peace-keeping mission as a civilian contractor. They were married in her village and lived there for 8 months before moving to the United States.

Lejla did not know Operation Christmas Child by name until her sister-in-law told her about a shoe box packing project for needy kids around the world several years ago. Lejla immediately made the connection. "I told my sister that I received one of those shoe box gifts when I was younger!" Lejla said.


Because she knows first-hand what a blessing a shoe box gift can be to a hurting child, Lejla encourages anyone who wants to touch a life to consider packing a box. She plans to pack shoe box gifts for needy children this year with her own two kids this year. Lejla also had the unique opportunity to travel to Macedonia, near her home country, to deliver shoe box gifts to needy children in early 2008.

"It is hard to put into words what that box meant to me. It really changed my life," said Lejla. "Now I pack some of those boxes. I pray that all of the boys and girls who receive shoe box gifts will know that they are loved."


Lejla will be sharing her story at Winona First Baptist Church, Sunday, July 20 at 11:00 a.m. Please call (662) 574-8845 for more information.



Congratulations
To James & Beth Jackson who are the proud parents of a baby girl, Olivia Grace, weighing 6 lbs, 12 ozs. born June 25th.



Congratulations
To Joey & Betsy Tompkins who are the proud parents of a baby boy, Joseph "Joe" Reed, weighing 10 lbs, 6 ozs. born June 30th. He is welcomed by big sister, Molly, grandparents, Nanda & Rusty Reed and great grandmother, Evon Austin.



Congratulations
To Suzanne Ansley, who is the proud mother of a baby girl, Saralyn, weighing 7 lbs, 5 ozs. born June 17th. The proud grandmother is Sara Jane Ansley.

Sharing God's Transforming Love

THE NEWSLETTER



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Wednesday Summer Children's Activities
2008
July 16th
Bowling at Strike Zone
In Grenada
Leave the church at 5:00 p.m. back @ 7:30 p.m.
Cost: \$10.00
Includes Supper & 2 games of bowling.
Bring extra money if you wish to play the arcade games.



And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit..

II Corinthians 3:18

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