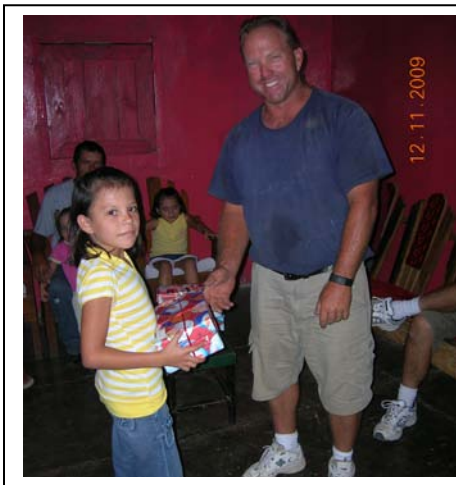


Christmas is the season for gift-giving

With heartfelt thanks to a group of women from Westminster Presbyterian Church in West Chester, PA, who have a shoebox ministry, Christmas gifts were donated and sent to all of the children of the local construction team helping to build our new clinic in La Entrada. For several years now, these women collect small, age-appropriate toys, games and personal care items that fit into shoe boxes and send them to children in different parts of the world during the holiday season through a program known as *Operation Christmas Child*.

The boxes were gift wrapped or adorned with personalized decorations provided by Sunday school classes at Westminster and tagged with each recipient's name. Leslie Lawrence, team leader for this project said "their organization believes no child should be without a gift for Christmas. This is the season for joy, hope and goodwill."



Gift boxes were delivered by the crew leaders from our Arkansas construction partner, Tech Serve International, who visited with the workers in their homes. For some families, this will be the only gift of the season for the children as Christmas may mean an extra helping of food – toys are generally beyond their means. The children were unaccustomed to seeing gaily decorated boxes, and in wrapping paper, no less! These boxes were warmly received by the families and would remain unopened until Christmas day. You can see from the children's expressions that they did not know what to do with gifts, as many had not received such things prior to this year.

Serving others and partnering are very important for Crossroads. The giving of self - the application of skills and talents by the local workers, along with these gifts of appreciation are but one additional way to recognize those who, with sweat and brawn, have toiled on this project to bring medical care to the community.