

# HAPPENINGS



## Dress a Girl in Colombia A Successful Missions Project

When some church ladies in The Benton Church asked Millie, a retired missionary, if she would be interested in taking some dresses to Colombia on her next short-term mission trip, Millie was enthusiastic. After making contact with her friends in Colombia, Millie announced that she would like to take three hundred dresses to the Colombian girls. In four short months the dresses were made and shipped to Bogotá.

The dresses were stacked according to size. Local church workers knew the approximate size each girl would need. They would pick up three different fabric colors in each size so the girls had an opportunity to choose the color of dress they preferred.



One of the locations where dresses were distributed was Juan Rey. Millie and a local pastor set out down the street to visit the children in their homes. Each girl joyfully selected the color of dress she wanted to wear. Some of the girls immediately put the dresses on over their existing clothes as big smiles lit up their faces. Often Millie would take the opportunity to give a Bible lesson to the children in a home.



Estelle, a Colombian pastor's wife, told the girls what the dress tag said.



Millie glows when she talks about the children in Colombia. She loves them deeply and is earnestly concerned about their salvation and educational opportunities. She spent over forty years teaching children in Colombia about Jesus.



John Martyn, the United Methodist pastor in Benton, Kansas, and his wife Melinda helped distribute the dresses. Estelle, a Colombian pastor's wife asked Melinda if she had anything she wanted to say to the girls. Melinda said, "The ladies who made these dresses have the love of Jesus in their hearts. Because of that, they have a love for you in their hearts." This knowledge seemed to touch the hearts of the young girls. Melinda says it was very special to have the opportunity to distribute the dresses and witness the impact that receiving a dress made with love had on those girls.



The need of the families varied. Often the girls' fathers were out of work. In single parent homes, some of the mothers were unemployed. Melinda commented that it is amazing how homey they make their houses using whatever they have available. "It wasn't fancy, but it seemed to suit them," said Melinda. Children's drawings often decorated the walls.



Melinda says that making those dresses and seeing them delivered forms a connection between you and the girls. The girls liked them. They all had smiles on their faces. They were tickled to be able to select the color they wanted. "That connection is not only important for them, but it is important for us because we become so isolated in our culture that we do not realize God is reaching out to other people too. We have no better way of touching those lives than through the dresses."

