

Coats for Kids 2013-14

12-21-13

The weather was absolutely perfect for a coat distribution, with temperatures around forty, clear roads, sunny skies, and a cool breeze. A little after nine this morning, Larry and I loaded up the car and headed up the road to the LeFevre house, where the elder daughters, Katy and Polly, were waiting for us.



These girls have been a help and a blessing to the coat distributions for several years now. Katy is in on holiday break from college in America, and it was really good to have her back.

Together we headed to Novi Pazar where we were to begin this year's coat season. We barely had time to greet the Pastor and his wife before the first group of kids arrived. They were a lively, rowdy bunch. I was thrilled to see them again—and they were thrilled to see us.

Thumbs up for Coats for Kids!

After this group went on their merry way, the cutest little chocolate-sticky-handed boy came in. He was three or four and pinchably cute. I resisted the urge to pinch his cheeks, and instead ruffled his hair and kissed the top of his head. His buddies instantly teased him. We all had a good laugh over that one. But the next cute little guy to come in, ran away screaming—probably because Katy, Polly, and I all jumped up at the same time to grab him up and get him a coat. Poor kiddo!

The rest of that distribution went smoothly with no kissing, teasing, or screaming. We gave coats, socks, and DVDs to around 70 kids there.



We headed back to our house for some lunch and to meet up with our Dutch friends, Rober and Silvia. We brought more bags of coats and socks down from upstairs and filled the cars. Then we drove on to Kaspichan.

Kaspichan is wild. I could describe it for you, but really, in order to fully understand it, you'd have to experience it for yourself. It's just wild.

I warned Silvia to watch herself and her phone and purse. I also warned her not to let folks get pushy with her. I hoped and prayed she would understand and heed my warning and that she wouldn't be shocked at the condition of the village. Honestly, she exceeded my hopes. Not only did she do well with her surroundings, she did a really great job helping fit the teenagers with coats. She took time with them and made them feel special. She hand-picked colors for the girls that matched their complexions. Larry and I laughed because we don't usually take that much time with the kids because the crowds can go from mild to wild in no time flat if you take too long getting to each kid. But with so much help today, we could afford to spare one helper to take time with the teens.



They loved her! We ended up giving out around sixty coats and socks there. The demand for DVDs was so great today, we ran out.

At the final village, I had one of my clumsy moments and nearly fell backward onto a woodstove. What can I say? I know how to make an entrance. It became comedy fodder—a fabulous conversation piece. And, it lightened the mood when things were getting too serious (a woman in that village was upset that we did not come with a brown coat. Also, I inadvertently embarrassed a teenage boy by handing him a red coat—each village has different style preferences and in that particular village, red is a girl's color. Oops.). Silvia was a blessing to a tired Mother (one of the poorest of that village). She obviously needed a coat, so Silvia reached into the pile and not only gave her a nice coat, she told her how pretty she was in it. This young mother of four girls walked away with the biggest smile. In the end, we gave out somewhere around twenty coats in that village and then we called it a day. And what a wonderful day it was!!

We arrived home to a big pot of delicious chili, and no dirty dishes in the sink. Every Mother's dream!

Larry and I sat down after supper to relax a bit and in our email I found the following from fellow missionary Dave Turner, detailing the coat/sock distribution in Eforie, Romania. I cried. These children, who were already so poor, lost what little they did have when the government rolled through with bulldozers and crushed their shacks in a shanty town. Last week I wrote that Brother Dave asked for our help in acquiring the coats/socks, and that we would also try to send along some pants. We were able to get everything to him at our group Christmas dinner the other day. He told us he would send pictures, and he did. Here are just a few:

This is a before and after. Notice the feet of the child on the left.



The fella at front left came in without a pair of pants, but he left with pants, socks, and a coat. This one makes me cry buckets. With a pair of pants, he can have a chance to go to school.



And one final picture, a few of the 48 kids who got coats, socks, and pants in Eforie:



Yes! Thumbs up again for Coats for Kids!

It was funny to us that while Larry was snapping a picture in Novi Pazar, with kids giving us the thumbs up, Brother Dave was snapping a similar picture in Eforie. It blesses my heart. They are thrilled and thankful to have received this help today. These children are precious. Absolutely precious! I'm thankful we were able to help them. I bless the name of the Lord, who has made all this possible.

Thank you all for your prayers! Stay tuned for the next update.

On Behalf of the Leach Family,

Carrie Leach

Bulgaria