



Winter is just around the corner which makes us think about searching our closets for warm outer wear. Unfortunately there are many who find the closet nearly bare when it comes to putting warm coats on their children. We want to make sure that this is not the case in Calgary, especially in our community and specifically with the newly arrived Ukrainian evacuee families.

The Coats for Kids program was born out of this need. On October 1st, 2023 the **Pass It On** organization combined with the **Knights Of Columbus** set about to ensure this would not happen. With over whelming financial support from individual parishioners, the Ed Stelmach Foundation, the UCWLC and the Knights of Columbus, we met and exceeded our fund raising goal. Prior to the doors being opened at 4:30 pm, all of the 40 plus volunteers gathered and received a group blessing from Fr Mike.

This year was no ordinary year of simply handing out coats to kids, it was made into an event. It was a clear bright sunny fall day. As our guest families arrived they were met in the parking lot by a very unique tailgate party trailer manned by the members and families of the UHL (Ukrainian Hockey League), distributing hotdogs, juice boxes, chips and granola bars. A special treat was prepared by some of the women at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian parish. A topping of cabbage, onions, corn and shredded carrots was provided. The children had so much fun playing in the parking lot that many did not want to go home.

Once inside the hall, families were greeted by the sounds of old time Ukrainian music played live by the St Stephen Church house band. The majority who are members of the KofC. After registering, the families were directed to one of two stations to try on and fit brand new winter coats. Once accomplished they were escorted to the KofC room by youth from the Plast Scouting organization. Here the children picked out the colour they wanted and were then shown to one of the classrooms where new winter mitts and toques were waiting for them. Also available were a limited number of winter skates and children's



KofC distribution room



The house band.



Registration desk



That day we served up over 450 hotdogs, danced to the music of the band and provided new winter coats, hats and mitts to nearly 300 Ukrainian evacuee children from St Stephen Protomartyr Ukrainian Catholic, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic and St Vladimir Ukrainian Orthodox parishes. We received thankyou's from many parents as well as comments on how welcomed they felt by the hospitality provided to them here in Canada. But most important of all, we accomplished the goal of filling those closets of winter clothing items for our new Ukrainian evacuee families.

Thank you to everyone who volunteered and contributed in any way as well as the prayers you offered for the success of the Coats for Kids program!

Submitted by Bill Lewchuk



Presentation of \$3000.00 cheque to Coats for Kids from Ed Stalmach Foundation. Left to right: KofC State Advocate SDCn Bill Lewchuk, Pass It On Executives Dedorah Johnson, Ali deBoer, Theresa Lewchuk, Grand Knight council 7659 Dan Oryschak, Director Ed Stelmach Foundation Ivan Weleschuk, St Stephen Protomartyr Ukrainian Catholic parish priest Fr Michael Bombak



Some of the UHL team members



Mitts and toques room.



Line up out the door.



Tailgate party

