



From the

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My Dear Friends at St. Elizabeth,

I am a person of “words,” yet when it comes to giving thanks for your generosity, it always seems that words never come close to expressing how appreciated your generosity and kindness has been to my families. St. Elizabeth’s has always been so generous to our families at Mercy Center, a neighborhood in the Bronx, that, unfortunately, has been overtaken with violence. It is the third poorest congressional district in the country, and now also has one of the highest rates of violence. Yet, amidst this, because of generous people like you, we can bring some semblance of “calm” – showing how God’s people are good, kind and caring – people who don’t even know them personally, yet know they have helped. I’d like to thank your parish for their generosity, especially those who coordinated this “back to school” distribution for several years now. They came to the rescue in the beginning of the pandemic and have kept the “back to school tradition” going for our kids.

Although my words cannot come close to expressing my appreciation, I am hoping that the smiling faces of my kids can. Look at their eyes and their faces – honestly, this was already the second week of school, and all but 2 didn’t have a new back pack. Instead, the moms “fixed” up their back packs from last year. Our families are poor, yet rich in resourcefulness and faith – probably what I love most about them. I was talking with Araceli, one of our 4th graders the other day and she told me “my dad says we’re not poor – we have what we need – we have each other” - and this is coming from a little girl, where two kids and both parents live in a one bedroom apartment. Each day, my kids and their families inspire me – to want less – and to do more. I am blessed to have all of you to help “do more” for my kids and their families.

It has been a difficult year for many of my families. After the pandemic, rents were raised, so they are now renting out a room in their apartments trying to make ends meet, so having a book bag, well, takes a back seat. We also had a family who’s father passed away in July – he was the bread winner and now, the mom, and two kids, Lizette and Anthony, have moved in with another family. Then there is Elizabeth – her family’s apartment was burned – and deemed unlivable. She now travels back and forth to Brooklyn to a shelter with her parents. It’s an hour and a half ride. Their world is a different one - it is one of survival, perseverance and faith. They teach me so much every day.

Although my words can’t come close to expressing my appreciation to you - I know that these pictures may come close to showing you the hearts you have touched and the lives you have changed. Look at the smiles – look at the eyes of my little ones – that says it all! And, then look at the women shopping – nothing a woman loves more than shopping and not having to look at a price tag.

St. Elizabeth doesn’t only “talk the talk” but you “walk the walk.” You are truly a parish of Christ’s love in action. The love and compassion goes far and wide! Thank you for always being open to “allow others to serve where there is a need.” One of my favorite quotes is “To Love another is to see the face of God.” How true this is – through your love, our families see the face of God. May God continue to bless all those who so generously donated back packs, clothing, etc. Please know how much it is appreciated.

Please share the attached pictures <https://photos.app.goo.gl/mKClnup5LpqxPSSN8> and let everyone know how much we appreciate their continued support and generosity.

May God’s love always surround you,
Marianne Sheridan, Youth Programs Manager, Mercy Center
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