

## Operation: success for overseas children

A task originally set up for junior Cambridge High School (CHS) students has turned into a big community initiative - one set to help third world countries.

Teacher Heidi Lewis spoke to the *Cambridge Edition* about Operation Christmas Child (OCC) in August this year, and encouraged members of the public to take part in it.

The initiative involved filling shoe boxes with presents such as soaps, toys, and toothbrushes for children in less fortunate parts of the world.

The Waikato alone filled more than 2000 boxes, and she estimates Cambridge filled about 500 of them.

Early last month 11 girls from CHS went to Auckland to help process the boxes. Until then, Bryan Urwin had allowed the boxes to be stored at his business Cambridge Storage Units for free.

Year nine student Charlotte Mitchell said she's done little things to help people overseas before, but this was on a much larger scale.

"I think that everybody has made a difference - even if it is a small one - in a child's life."

During the sorting process, she

read some emotional messages people had written for the children.

"We had to make sure the boxes were full. It was really heartwarming to see what people put in their boxes and see the time and effort they had gone to," she said.

Student Penny Wallis said she would definitely be doing OCC in the future.

"It was a nice experience to do something for the children who won't get anything else for Christmas."

Because of extra commitments next year, Lewis won't have the time to run Operation Christmas Child again - so the students have formed a committee.

She said she is proud of Cambridge and what has been achieved here. The high school filled 76 boxes, and Karapiro School joined in to fill more.

Wesley Ventor from Wetworx provided the girls with volunteer shirts for the Auckland trip.

The boxes will now be shipped to countries such as Vietnam and Cambodia, then videos will be posted on the OCC website of the children unwrapping their gifts.



Cambridge High School students Emma Morely and Eden Lawrence sort through boxes for Operation Christmas Child in Auckland.