

## “LIFE GROWS BY BEING GIVEN AWAY”

Maria Auxiliadora School, Our Lady Aparecida Province, Canoas/RS, Brazil

*“Life grows by being given away, and it **weakens** in **isolation** and comfort.”*

Pope Francis, *EVANGELII GAUDIUM*



Maria Auxiliadora School regularly holds major events to support the people in need. In May, during the celebration of the 72nd anniversary of the School, a traditional contest was held. Groups of students were asked to bring items for needy persons. One activity was to provide volunteer community service in five social institutions of the city. This group also asked for donations of non-perishable food, toiletries, cleaning products, baby and geriatric diapers. The SOS House of Welcome, which cares for children who are victims of violence, abuse and family neglect, received a donation of 23,995 baby diapers. This donation will supply the needs of the institution for 8 months.

At the beginning of June, students, families, and employees of Maria Auxiliadora School participated in the Winter Campaign of the Students' Association. About 9,000 pieces of adult clothing, blankets and shoes were collected by them. The significant donation enabled them to meet the needs of 8 city institutions including parishes and social centers that help homeless people, poor families and immigrants.

Another important time for giving is in November and December, as part of our Thanksgiving Project - a Christmas activity which aims to raise awareness and involve the school community in concrete acts for those in need. Another goal of this time is to give thanks for all the graces received throughout the year. In 2015, used and cleaned backpacks were donated for the students of two public schools. Four other institutions donated non-perishable food and used toys in good condition.

The contagious energy and ever new involvement of students, parents and employees in the solidarity campaigns of the School help us to believe that the most important thing is not the food, clothes, shoes, blankets, toys, backpacks, etc., donated, but the commitment to life with an attitude of giving. This is an important theme that we draw from the Holy Father's teaching when he says, *“Life grows by being given away.”*