

Lotshaw Helping Hands

1492 Palmyrita Ave. Riverside, CA 92507 (951) 781-0302

Lotshaw Helping Hands was started back in 1982 (although at that time, it did not have a name) to help Trinity Christian Center, the church we were attending. The church was running a small food program to help the church members and families that would come in and ask for help. At the time, our air conditioning company would let the church use our trucks at no cost to go into Los Angeles and pick up salvage produce. The produce at times had to be gone through to glean what was still good. At times, 50% or more of the produce would have to be thrown away.



At first, a small pickup was big enough but in a short time, Lotshaw Air Conditioning needed to loan their stake truck to pick up the food. After a period of time, the church could no longer continue the good distribution program. My wife Linda and I said that the people could not be forgotten so we took the food ministry on and moved operations to our office. Over time, the food ministry grew from our small trucks to our 18 wheeler and a 45' dry trailer and a 45' reefer trailer. We also



expanded to the Native American tribe, the Navajo's; and added clothing, hygiene, and building products to our ministry.

In this period of time, our desire to help those in need took on a name. Lotshaw Helping Hands was born and is still trying to do what we feel God is calling us to do.



In 1994, we went to work for Operation Blessing, a large non-profit organization. We ran a warehouse and a small fleet of 18 wheelers for them. Our job was to pick up donated food and other items to distribute through a network of non-profits in the Western United States. This network was to supply to the needy families in their areas. In 2006, we resigned from Operation Blessing, passing on a ministry that we loved.

After leaving Operation Blessing, Linda and I went back to our first love even though we never left it. The Lotshaw Helping Hands of today is still involved in the same activities of the past but has taken on new ways of helping. We take food to areas in Central California, the Navajo Reservation, and here in our local area.



We love children so they are where we are putting most of our efforts. We believe if we help the children we are also helping the whole family. We started our children ministry in 1998 because we feel that God was leading us in that direction.

Most of our work with children is accomplished by working with the public school systems. We invite 60



children at a time for a shopping spree at a local JC Penney store. Lotshaw Helping Hands gives each child a \$100.00 gift card to shop with and the store always gives the children extra discounts to assure they get the most for each dollar. Each and every child is pre-screened to find those with the greatest need but we

make sure that each child knows that their special and loved and that's why they were invited to come and shop.



The children come to JC Penney in a school bus directly from the school. When they arrive, we check them in, and pair them with their own special shopper who will guide them through the store to assure

they are safe and make sure they shop wisely. We have many different volunteers, from high school honor societies, church groups, and even the California Highway Patrol. Each child checks out in the same area so we can monitor the money and make sure they don't get any items that are against the school's dress codes.



After shopping the children come out to our trailer where we have brand new backpacks full of school supplies and toys. We also give them a bag full of candy and other special gifts. At that time, they children each get a ticket that gives them a chance to win a bicycle. We take 2 boys and 2 girl's bicycles to each event. The children are always excited and hope their name gets drawn. Over the years, we have taken children shopping in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Idaho, and Oregon.

The bicycles that we have for the children at our events come from a prison in California. Lotshaw Helping Hands and other organizations collect old bicycles and take them to the prison. The inmates refurbish the bicycles and they are given back to the different organizations so they can get into the hands of children that really need them.

Since 1982, Linda and I have had children and their families on our hearts and minds. Our goal is if we see a need and we have a way to help then we cannot pass by without helping. It doesn't matter who it is, what's important is that the need is met by God's grace and mercy. All that we do we hope to show how much God Loves those we are helping.



Written by Charles Lotshaw
July 2009