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Pictures of Hope let children share dreams

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Each card contains a child's photograph and what their dream is.

Written by Sue Mason Observer Staff Writer

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Hope comes in all shapes and sizes. It can be as simple as having furniture, as touching as donating to homeless people and as big as feeding all the people in the world. It can be a hope and dream to go to college or have people pick up the trash so people can walk outside in their socks.

Those were the hopes depicted in photographs taken by a group of children served by the Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries for Birmingham photographer Linda Solomon's nationally acclaimed program "Pictures of Hope" Project.

"We had so much fun together, we'll be friends forever," said Solomon, who joined the children in an unveiling of their Picture of Hope cards at a party Tuesday at Gordon Chevrolet in Garden City.

"I'm so proud of them, I'm thrilled to see their faces. This builds their self-esteem."

Pictures of Hope

Gordon Chevrolet is joining with the Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries in selling 15-card sets of the

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children's Picture of Hope cards for \$20. All of the money will go to DRMM which provides services ranging from emergency shelter to job training for men, women and children in the Detroit community. Cards can be ordered by calling Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries at (313) 993-4700 or stopping by Gordon Chevrolet at 38150 Ford, west of Merriman in Garden City.

Solomon has been doing her Pictures of Hope Project since 1990 and has reached out to more than 1 million children. She provided the lesson in photography and then gave children one-time use cameras and an assignment to capture photos of hope. She processed the film and selected one photograph for each child and turned them into cards. Five hundred sets of cards were made and are being sold at \$20 each this holiday season to raise money for the DRMM.

ban doesn't fly

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"They did a wonderful, wonderful job," said Susan Ianni, general manager of Gordon Chevrolet. "Linda had lots of photos to choose from because the children took fabulous pictures."

Solomon had been partnering with GM on the project since 2006, but this year, she was joined by Chevrolet which asked Ianni in what she would like to be involved.

"Part of our philosophy is charity work, we participate in something every month," she said. "It's been ingrained in this dealership. I think that's probably why GM approached us. It took 30 seconds to say yes. I think they knew we would do it."

"I felt honored to be asked, I felt honored to work with these children," she added.

Dr. Chad Audi, president and CEO of the DRMM, thanked Solomon for selecting "our children" for the project.

"We service people from cradle to grave," he said. "We have been serving the community since 1909. We serve 3,500-4,000 meals a day and provide shelter for 1,400 men, women and children each day. They come to us homeless and leave with hope. We could not do it without the support of GM and Chevrolet. "

The children each received backpacks filled with goodies including two packs of the Pictures of Hope cards, provided by Gordon Chevrolet. One pack was to open, the other pack was a keepsake and had the business cards of Ianni and managers James Schram and Tim Swimea.

"The whole point to putting those cards on those packs is that down the road when you're in school and have a question about a career or want to tell us you tried your best in school, we're here," Ianni told the children. "If you keep in contact, we may be able to help you with your hopes and dreams."

Eleven-year-old Shalaon Knight's hope is that everyone can have a home and not be on the streets. She conveyed her hope in her photograph of a playset. Her mother and her five siblings were sheltered by DRMM, which helped them get a house.

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"My dream came true," she said. "I didn't know they we're making them into cards. That makes me feel happy."

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