

# MERCY FOR GOOD

BY JANINE HAND

In a 2015 interview with Oprah Winfrey, Bryan Stevenson said, “you measure the health of your soul by how we treat the poor, the incarcerated, and the condemned.” A Harvard grad, professor at New York University School of Law, author, and founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, he told Oprah “mercy is what you give to others with the hope that it will come back to you.”

Mercy took center stage a few weeks ago the Class Six graduation of Project Launch at Kitchens for Good©. Most of those proud graduating students had been poor, incarcerated, and condemned. But someone showed them mercy, someone gave them hope, and they all got diplomas and the opportunity to go forth in life, making new paths for themselves. Mercy was on display here at Calvary when we were invited by our friends at St. James Catholic, Solana Beach, to bake and donate dozens of cookies for the prison ministry program. And, it made a cameo appearance when we donated \$800.00 to Solana Vista School to support fifteen students in need of tutoring.

But Mercy was the star of the show when we collected, sorted, packaged, and delivered hundreds of new socks and underwear to our homeless brothers and sisters in the Helping Hands ministry at St. Peter’s Episcopal, Del Mar. Over the next month, we’re collecting very gently used purses, handbags, and ladies’ briefcases for Purses with a Purpose, filling them with stationery and toiletry items, and donating to the female graduates of the next two upcoming classes of Kitchens for Good©. Once collected, we’ll need help filling the bags. I invite and encourage you to have your own experiences of hope, mercy, and compassion through this outreach initiative. Please consider donating to this meaningful ministry, and email me at [janinehand@calvarylutheranchurch.org](mailto:janinehand@calvarylutheranchurch.org) if you can help deliver our donations.

Utah Woolen Mills of Salt Lake City Utah has been manufacturing and tailoring luxury custom clothing since 1905. Still family owned and operated, they started an outreach effort “Suited for Good” where for every suit sold, they tailor and donate one to someone dedicated to getting their life back on track. Applications are reviewed, the recipients are fitted and their suits are tailored (including new socks and shoes), and candidates are even given interview tips to help them successfully re-enter the working world. Company president B.J. Stringham told Steve Harvey in a recent television interview, “We want to be a wide net so we can help as many people as possible.” Utah Woolen Mills is manufacturing mercy in addition to their apparel, by their display of empathy and compassion through hope, generosity, and opportunity.

Bryan Stevenson also talked about human ignorance and the desire to shut away those who are burdens of society, adding “people are quick to demonize and condemn people we fear”. Jesus lived in a time where people were quick to demonize and condemn, yet He called us to demonstrate the love of God with our acts of hope, mercy, and compassion. Thank you, Calvary, for all you’ve done and continue to do to live out Jesus’ calling. Thank you for your generous demonstrations of empathy and compassion; embracing our local community and beyond. There’s Kitchens for Good©, there’s Suited for Good, and at Calvary, I’m inviting us to have Mercy, for good.

***“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.” ~ Colossians 3:12***