

Food Donations Needed

On Saturday, May 10th, letter carriers in Georgetown, along with more than 1,200 post offices nationwide, participated in the 22nd Annual Letter Carriers' Food Drive. Food donations collected by the Georgetown Post Office letter carriers go directly to The Caring Place Food Pantry. While this year's Postal Food Drive generated nearly 6,000 pounds of food for The Caring Place Food Pantry, that amount was significantly less than the 19,811 pounds of food collected last year.

"The summer months are the second busiest time of the year for our Food Pantry, when children are home from school and families cannot easily access the schools' free and reduced lunch programs," states The Caring Place Executive Director, Ginna O'Connor. "Although the community generously

donates to our Food Pantry during the holidays, the supply of donated food really dries up once we get into March – so the Food Pantry shelves are pretty bare by the time summer comes."

"What we don't receive in food donations from the community, we have to purchase," says Donations Director, David Earl. "Donations from the community allow us to offer a wide variety of nutritious food and helps offset our food costs."

We send our heartfelt thanks to the Georgetown Post Office letter carriers, and the Georgetown community for their continued generosity. Food



donations are accepted at The Caring Place, Monday through Saturday, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. If you would like information about hosting a food drive, please contact Rita Turner at rturner@caringplacex.org or 512-943-0702.

A Thank You Note From One of Our Clients...

The author, Vivian Green, wrote, "Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass; it is about learning how to dance in the rain." I think that is what I am doing every day. I am trying to learn how to dance in the rain to get through all of this.

I finally got the nerve up to go to The Caring Place and ask for help. That was really hard for me. I sat in the lobby hungry and crying, fearing when it was my turn they would turn me away or not have any resources left because there were so many people in need there.

I met with a volunteer who verified everything I told them, and they helped me by paying the balance I owed on my January rent and helped pay my electric and water so my utilities would not get cut off the next day. They got the medication that I needed so badly and got me some groceries. With a gas voucher, I was able to go see my husband at the nursing home. I cannot thank you enough; it was so good to see him and hold his hand. I am so grateful for the time we have together and for everything you have done to help me.

You don't understand I was really at the end of my rope and thought life was over for me. I thought that God had forgotten about me because it seemed as if none of my prayers were being answered. All I knew was I could not go through another day like I had been going through. But The Caring Place gave me hope. Your words of encouragement gave me the strength to push through this most difficult time in my life. I would not have any food if it weren't for you! I want you to know I appreciate your hard work and long hours and dedication. Thank you for being there and helping people like me who really need it. Thank you so much. Thank you each staff member and volunteer. I am so grateful. I truly thank you, for all of your help from the bottom of my heart. I don't know what I would have done had you not helped me. I don't think I would be here today.



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors,

My appreciation for our community continues to grow daily. It is a joy to call you “neighbor” and see you care for people who live in this community.

Volunteers, donors (of both dollars and gently used items for our thrift store), businesses and organizations throughout Georgetown and Northern Williamson County demonstrate daily how much they care about their neighbors in need. In 2013, 452 individuals volunteered at The Caring Place. They are invaluable to our efforts, and in real numbers, they represent a \$1.1 million in-kind contribution to The Caring Place budget (this is the dollar equivalent of their work in the marketplace). We are making a difference in the lives of many; however, none of it can happen without kind and tenderhearted people.

In just the first quarter of 2014, The Caring Place has served 1,139 people, which includes 250 first-time families. We anticipate that these numbers will continue to increase. Data provided at the Community Impact Summit on April 22, 2014 revealed that there is a tidal wave of people making their way to our county. Georgetown is the 4th fastest growing city in Texas with a population of 50,000 or more. Furthermore, just to get by, a family of two (one adult, one child) requires a wage of \$17.00 an hour. We have many in our community who are not even close to earning this hourly rate.

Your continued support enables us to assist families in need right here in Georgetown and Northern Williamson County. With your help, we can continue to provide food for hungry families, assist people with medical bills, utility and rent costs and provide temporary emergency shelter. Our newest program, Success through Opportunities And Resources (SOAR), will support the efforts of those seeking to overcome poverty and become self-sufficient.

I hope you will continue your relationship with The Caring Place. Together, we are making a difference! If you are interested in volunteering or learning more about The Caring Place, please come by for a visit. We encourage you to make a donation today by visiting our website at www.caringplacetx.org, or by using the enclosed donation envelope.

Thank you for caring.

Sincerely,

Lenora Doerfler

Board President, 2014

Please join us for a

LUNCH 'N LEARN

The Caring Place Board of Directors and staff cordially invite you to join us for lunch and a “behind-the-scenes” glimpse into the inner workings of this Georgetown institution. You’ll learn how The Caring Place maximizes its resources, ensuring we remain strong and well positioned to continue to make a difference for our neighbors every year.

Lunch ‘n Learn is held monthly at The Caring Place on the 4th Thursday, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Special lunch events can be scheduled for groups upon request. For more information or to make a lunch reservation, contact Ginna O’Connor at 512-943-0701, or goconnor@caringplacetx.org.

SAVE THE DATE

7th Annual Sweets, Treats and Trees



**Thursday,
November 13, 2014**

**Enjoy holiday shopping,
cookies and other homemade
treats, live music and
door prizes.**



24th Annual Soup Supper



Bob and Ginny Stam



Brian and Chapman keep things nice and clean at The Soup Supper.

A festive “thank you” to the community for all the support it provides to assist those in crisis in Georgetown and Northern Williamson County with basic human needs, The Caring Place 24th Annual Soup Supper, was held on February 20th. It was a fun evening of food and fellowship. This year’s event featured live music from Swingtime Big Band, and was sponsored by J. Paul Aubin Real Estate Company.



Volunteers stirred the soup with love.



Serving soup with a smile for 24 years.



Pat Hooper and Cindy Graham

THANK YOU!!

New Pilot Program Helps Combat Payday/Title Loan Debt

Exactly how bad are payday/title loans? They are deceptively easy to obtain, and notorious for carrying high interest rates. At The Caring Place, we often see clients struggling to pay off these loans, many with interest rates reaching 800% and more.

To provide a viable alternative, First Texas Bank and The Caring Place have teamed up to provide an Alternative Loan Program to The Caring Place clients. This program will assist qualified individuals in paying off a payday or title loan that has a high interest rate, decrease the use of

payday or title loans, and help clients rebuild their credit.

First Texas Bank will provide a loan of up to \$1,000, at a very low interest rate, for up to a 1-year term. Providing the client with a short-term, low-interest traditional loan, along with monthly guidance from The Caring Place, allows the client to finally escape the allure of payday/title loans.

Thank you to First Texas Bank for offering this valuable service to The Caring Place clients!

2014 Volunteer Recognition and Appreciation



David Earl and Mike Carson



Al Beaver, Steve Schlobohm, Jodie Steger



Ginna O'Connor and Sheryl Rich

In May 12th, The Caring Place Board of Directors and staff hosted an evening of live music and dancing in the Sun City Ballroom to thank and honor our wonderful volunteers during the Annual Volunteer Recognition and Appreciation Event.

Highlights of the evening included: a slide presentation showcasing the impact of our volunteers' efforts in 2013; our awards program, during which the significant contributions of five volunteers were recognized; wonderful food by CJs Catering; and music to sing along with and dance to by the energetic and entertaining, "Mr. Thrill."

Three of our volunteers were honored with **The Caring Heart Award**, which is a new award this year, recognizing outstanding contributions made in 2013:

Sheryl Rich is one of our fantastic and versatile volunteers who "does it

all." In 2013, Sheryl volunteered in Reception, Intake, Client Services, Donations and Fresh Food For Families, as well as serving on the Client Services Focus Group and the Client Advocate Training Team. She also developed a more practical and effective way to orient and train new Client Services volunteers by "following the file." She is well respected by her peers, who see her as a volunteer leader who is approachable, knowledgeable and caring about the many complexities related to serving our clients.

Mike Carson is our tremendously talented "Mr. Fixit." Prior to construction beginning on the Annex last year, Mike and a volunteer crew were heavily involved in the demolition work. Under Mike's supervision, he and the crew tore out the suspended ceiling,

removed the heating/ventilation/air conditioning systems and ductwork, took up floor coverings and removed insulation from the walls and ceilings. According to our architect, the work completed on the Annex by Mike and his crew saved The Caring Place over \$60,000. Mike continues to help us each week by fixing and repairing items at both facilities.

Steve Schlobohm regularly goes over and above for our clients and Client Advocates. Steve is a mentor to both new and seasoned Client Advocates; many seek his advice and guidance on how to work with clients. Determined to find resources for our clients, Steve worked closely with staff to put together a Resource Referral Guide that is utilized by our Client Advocates. He is also passionate about empowering those

in crisis, and excels in teaching budgeting and planning strategies. Steve volunteers not only for the day shift as a Client Advocate, but also on Thursday evening so clients who work during the day can have access to assistance. In addition, he delivers HOPE food to the elderly.

The **2013 Doris Krohmer Memorial Volunteer Service Award**, for extraordinary service and dedication to our mission, was given to two very deserving volunteers:

Al Beaver has donated his time and talent to The Caring Place for 2½ years. He is known for his ready reply of, "I'll do it!" – said with a great big smile on his face, matching his unshakeable positive attitude. Whether it be Fresh Food For Families distribution, decorating for Sweets, Treats and Trees, sorting and pricing Christmas ornaments, assisting in the Food Pantry, pricing Tiny Finds for Re-Finds, or cashiering (his regular shift plus substituting for others), Al is always willing to help. Al's contributions to The Caring Place cannot be quantified; he serves wherever and

whenever there is a need. We are delighted that Al has chosen to share his time and talents with us, and we thank him for the smiles, the positive attitude and the many hours of work he provides to further the mission of The Caring Place.

Jodie Steger can be described as caring, resourceful, dedicated, dependable and conscientious. Jodie is the "medical expert" in Client Services. Initially, she was trained to help clients with simple medical assistance, such as prescriptions and doctor appointment co-pays. However, Jodie took the initiative to research existing medical resources, and in doing so, found more ways she could help clients. She frequently utilizes prescription coupons on the internet, saving clients and The Caring Place hundreds of dollars. In addition, Jodie routinely calls

doctors, dentists and pharmacies to inquire about discounts for the clients. Jodie continually goes over and above to provide our clients with resources, services, and most importantly, hope.

Thank you to all of our volunteers – you are making a difference in the lives of those we serve! In 2013, our 452 wonderful and talented volunteers gave a total of 49,850 hours of service to our community, valued at \$1,166,490, which is the equivalent of 24 full-time employees.

We are always in need of volunteers; if you know of someone who would be interested in joining The Caring Place team, please contact Rita Turner at 512-943-0702, or rturner@caringplacetx.org.





Thrift Store News

The Caring Place thrift store, *The Shops at The Caring Place*, covers about 13,000 square feet of retail space. The shops referred to in the name are Fabulous Finds (our main sales floor), and three specialty shops: The Boutique, Re-Finds and Outdoors 'n' More.

The Boutique features clothing (some with its original tags, as well as very gently used items) at a fraction of their original price. While browsing The Boutique, you will also discover a fine selection of shoes, purses and jewelry. Our Jewelry department hosts a jewelry show on the second Thursday of each month from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. These shows are famous for their wonderful array of treasures.

In Re-Finds, you'll find antique items, vintage and modern collectibles, and decorative accessories.

Outdoors 'n' More contains our large appliances, sporting goods, medical and exercise equipment, and outdoor furniture.

We are continually grateful for the generosity of our item donors in Georgetown and surrounding communities. Six days per week, our Donations department takes in and processes a vast array of interesting, high-quality merchandise for resale in *The Shops at The Caring Place*. Without this support, we could not stock our large store. The revenue from the store, which was \$1.3 million in 2013, pays all of the overhead expenses for the entire organization, as well as contributes to Client Services budget needs. **This means that 100% of every monetary donation given to The Caring Place goes directly to providing services for our clients.**

Our dedicated volunteers are the very heart of our organization. Working at least one shift per week, volunteers keep the donated items moving through the sorting and pricing areas and onto the sales floor. Volunteers bring years of experience to their work areas. For instance, there are retired

engineers testing and pricing our electronics, antique collectors of 40 years or more identifying and pricing vintage items, and former teachers sorting and pricing books.

Shoppers often comment that our store is well organized and the merchandise is pleasantly displayed. This is the direct result of the time and talents of our volunteer merchandising team, many of whom have owned their own stores. The merchandisers decorate for every season, and are the driving force when the store is transformed for the Christmas season at the time of one of our most popular events: Sweets, Treats and Trees. This year marks the Seventh Annual Sweets, Treats and Trees event. **Please mark your calendars and save the date to attend this fun "evening of everything Christmas" event on Thursday, November 13, 2014.**

Whether it is a special event or an ordinary shopping day, our volunteer cashiers are the ones on the front lines, exhibiting patience, friendliness and all the other positive aspects of customer service. Working with the cashiers are our security volunteers. Security volunteers answer customer questions and keep an eye on the activity in the store.

We also have a handful of expert

volunteers who support our IT systems, and make sure our computerized point-of-sale systems are working properly and efficiently. They masterfully handle any computer issues that may arise, as well as train all of the cashier volunteers.

For several years, *The Shops at The Caring Place* has maintained a presence on the Ebay auction website, <http://stores.ebay.com/Georgetown-Caring-Place>. Working with staff to select items which would be better marketed online, the Ebay volunteers deftly handle the entire process of listing items (both for auction and in our Ebay store), handling all communication with buyers, and packing and shipping the sold merchandise.

For anyone wishing to enrich their life through volunteerism, *The Shops at The Caring Place* offer a wide variety of opportunities. For the past three years, The Caring Place has been awarded the Best of Georgetown's designation for The Best Place to Volunteer/Give. There are a few steps to becoming a volunteer at The Caring Place: completion of a volunteer application; passing a criminal background check; attending an orientation; and then training in your chosen area. We invite you to share your special talents with The Caring Place, and believe your experience will be a rewarding one.



SOAR in Flight

The **SOAR** (Success through Opportunities And Resources) Program of The Caring Place has launched. Developed in recognition and response to the intensive support needed to move individuals and families from crisis to self-sufficiency, the SOAR Program collaborates with partner agencies and businesses in Georgetown and Northern Williamson County to provide a centralized location to assist those who need multiple resources and educational opportunities, and assist families who are ready to take the next step in their self-sufficiency journey.

The Caring Place has identified seven key areas in which a person must achieve stability to become self-sufficient, and these are the areas in which SOAR will focus. These key areas include:

- Childcare
- Education
- Employment Stability
- Food
- Housing
- Income
- Transportation

Each of these key areas define those services needed to promote success.

Activities at The Caring Place Annex in support of SOAR include:

- Budget classes sponsored through United Way of Williamson County
- Nutrition classes provided by the A&M Agri-Life Extension Office
- Job placement assistance through Goodwill Industries

A trained Volunteer Mentor will be assigned to each participating family to assist with setting goals, accessing resources, and providing support and encouragement. Participating families and their mentors may work together for 6 months or longer, depending on the family's goals and need for support. After reaching their identified goals, the families will transition from the SOAR Program with the ability to support themselves without public or private assistance.

The Caring Place and community partner agencies are working together to create Success through Opportunities And Resources. For more information, or if you are interested in partnering with us, please contact Shanna Skipper at 512-943-0704, or sskipper@caringplacetx.org.

New Video Systems Available in The Caring Place Community Rooms

We are installing a new audio-video system to be used for meetings, training and classes at the Annex, and as this goes to press, the work is nearly completed.

Along with speakers in the ceiling grid, projector mounts have been installed. These new systems give us the ability to display video or other presentation materials with sound. We also have the ability to physically partition our large room into two smaller rooms to provide separate media presentations.

Each room has an independent volume control so sound levels can be adjusted to best match each presenter or sound source. The new microphone systems allow for presentations with wireless lavalier (lapel) and handheld microphones.

If you would like more information on becoming a SOAR partner, contact Shanna Skipper, our SOAR Coordinator, at 512-943-0704 or sskipper@caringplacetx.org.



Georgetown's Walmart and The Caring Place Partner to Keep Donated Food in Our Community



The Caring Place has recently partnered with the Georgetown Walmart to keep their food donations in our community. Qualifying individuals and families may receive a seven-day emergency food order once a month through The Caring Place Food Pantry. Last year, the Food Pantry distributed 382,350 pounds of food to 12,745 individuals in Georgetown and Northern Williamson County. The partnership was facilitated by the Capital Area Food Bank in Austin, which has worked with both The Caring Place and Walmart for several years.

"We are thrilled to be the direct recipient of our local Walmart's generosity," stated Ginna O'Connor, Executive Director of The Caring Place. "The Caring Place relies primarily on community food drives and donations to fill its pantry shelves, and when food donations are down, we need to

purchase food. Our partnership with Walmart has already helped to reduce those costs."

Walmart has donated the equivalent of more than one billion meals since 2005.

"It's been a big help," says David Earl, Donations Director at The Caring Place. "Since initiating our partnership, Walmart has donated several hundred pounds of meat, dried and canned goods, bread, beverages and other items that we have distributed to those in need in our community."

"I am fully supportive of The Caring Place uniting with the Georgetown Walmart," states Heath Ribordy, Agency Relations Manager at The Capital Area Food Bank. "This relationship will allow The Caring Place to better serve their community with additional food sourcing."

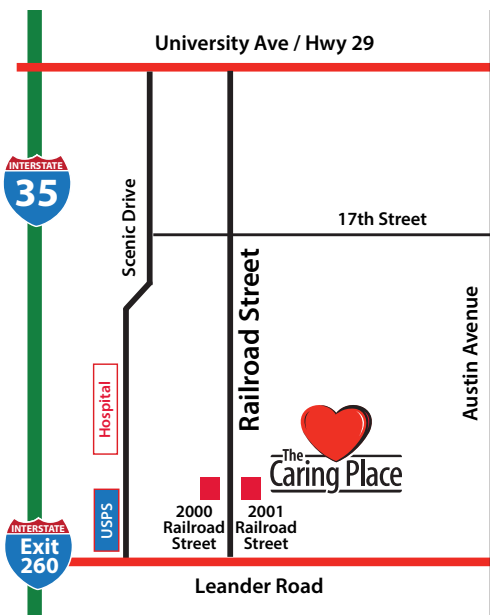
REBUILDING LIVES

The Caring Place ReBuild Program provides basic home repairs to address quality of life issues, as well as modifications to accommodate persons with disabilities. Every month, a volunteer crew, led by Board



member, Larry Baird, visits with clients to assess their building modification needs.

A recent client of The Caring Place requested assistance with the repair of the skirting around her manufactured home. This repair was necessary due to the unwelcome possibility of animals nesting under the home and water pipes freezing during the winter months. While replacing the skirting around her home, the ReBuild Team noticed that her back deck was so damaged that it needed to be demolished and replaced because she was in danger of falling through. The deck was rebuilt, and the client is now able to enjoy all of her home – indoors and outdoors – thanks to the support of The Caring Place and the ReBuild volunteers!



Our courtesy truck will pick up your larger item donations to be sold in *The Shops at The Caring Place*. To schedule a pick-up, please call our donation line at 512-943-0711 and leave a message for our Donations Coordinator. Your call will be returned within 24 hours. **Please allow at least one week of advance notice when you call to schedule your pick-up.**

Vision Statement

The Caring Place is a local, faith-based non-profit organization that addresses the basic human needs of people within its service area, and collaborates with community partners to improve the quality of life of every client.

Mission Statement

Honoring its faith-based roots, The Caring Place serves its clients and communities by:

- ♥ *Responding to the basic human needs of people in Georgetown and Northern Williamson County*
- ♥ *Providing access to resources that help clients to improve their quality of life*
- ♥ *Ensuring fiscal integrity to sustain the necessary programs and services to meet identified needs on a continuing basis*
- ♥ *Engaging and empowering clients, volunteers, donors and staff to create a welcoming environment and a place with purpose.*



WE ARE HONORED TO HAVE BEEN VOTED

Best Place to Volunteer / Give Organization
for the Best of Georgetown 2011, 2012 and 2013



2000 Railroad Street • P.O. Box 1215 • Georgetown, Texas 78627 • 512-943-0700 • Fax 512-943-0740 • www.caringplacetx.org

Caring Place Hours
Client Services Offices
Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Open Thursdays until 7:00 p.m.
Donation Drop-Off Area
Monday – Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
The Shops at The Caring Place
Monday – Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Open Thursdays until 7:00 p.m.
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