



Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services of Texas and Louisiana

December 2013 Volunteer Activity Report

Volunteers: 103, including 5 groups

Hours of Service: 1,093

In all of 2013, 631 volunteers provided 8,870.75 hours of service.

December is the month many of our volunteers provide extra blessings to the children and families we serve. One group began blessing the residents of the Waxahachie Group Homes in September and will continue through the spring. The fact that they helped the youth produce a memorable Christmas program was really a small part of their work.

About 15 students from the Southwest Assemblies of God University, who participate in a leadership program in collaboration with The Oaks Fellowship Church, visited the Waxahachie campus every Thursday afternoon for weeks as part of their curriculum. The volunteer group, led by second-year student Micaiah Skelton, spent one hour of their time on campus with PCHAS Group Home Director Cynthia Winters. During that hour, Cynthia provided instruction and coaching for the students, who then spent their second hour on campus working with all the residents. During the fall semester, the task was to teach the residents how to work together to produce a Christmas musical program. But, the real purpose of the program was to build Christian relationships between the residents and the SAGU students.

Guanesha Norman, one of the group home residents, said the best part of the program was being around people "who care about me." She became friends with her mentor and expects to continue that friendship long after both of them have moved on from Waxahachie. Every student was paired with one or more residents and significant bonds were formed.

Micaiah said one of the most exciting parts of the program was seeing the faces of the youth as they got off the school bus each Thursday afternoon and rushed into the campus auditorium to greet the SAGU students who were waiting for them. He said the work he and his fellow students did on the Waxahachie campus reminded him of why he is making a career of ministry, which sometimes is easy to forget during the stress of studies, exams and school. Micaiah will complete the leadership program in May, but he says, he hopes to return as a volunteer for PCHAS even after the program is finished for him.

Several groups helped make Christmas special for the children and families served by PCHAS.

First Presbyterian Church of Austin, led by Carol Murphy, provided games, crafts, food, entertainment and storytelling, as well as gifts, for the children and families served by the Austin Child and Family Program. Twenty-three volunteers from the church participated. Other volunteers who joined the party were Tammy Boehman, Laura Bistline, Donna Lyons and Virginia Schilz.

Members of Faith United Presbyterian Church in Farmers Branch made stockings for all the children and teens living at the Waxahachie Group Home Campus. This is the same church who has committed to pray for these children on a regular basis. The group is led by Ann Walden.

The San Antonio Christmas Party for the group homes and the Child and Family program was supported by Northwood Presbyterian Church members and St. Andrews Presbyterian Church members, as well as numerous Ambassadors. The volunteers included Marilyn Ward, Stephanie Balderas, Bev Grounds, Patty Clark, Sydney Wallace and Rev. Traci Smith, all of Northwood; the Agape Band of St. Andrews; Ambassadors: Mike and Nancy Brown, Annis Fisher, Mary and David Middleton, Marlene Patton, Nancy Puckett, Helen Richards, Kathy Simmons, Madge Bayston Storm, Susan Trull, and Joann Weston; and Emily Leech, Judy Harris, Sheron Antczak, and Dave Reiss.

The congregations of Parkway Presbyterian Church and First Presbyterian Church in Corpus Christi supported the Child and Family program's Gingerbread Project. They collected educational games, books and art activities for the program's clients. This effort was led by Judy Braselton, Martha DeCou and Barbara Leal of Parkway PC and Kim Tucker of First PC.

NorthPark Presbyterian Church of Dallas supported the Child and Family Program Christmas efforts with a PCHAS Angel Tree and volunteers at the program's Christmas Party. Volunteers included Judy Bryant, Steve Lusigian and Rev. Brent Barry, from NorthPark, and individual volunteers Rohoni Singh-Doubleday and Loriveda Doubleday.

During the Christmas season, churches often hold mission fairs in which members can make gifts to specific mission organizations in lieu of Christmas gifts to family and friends. Jill Foote, the Ambassador at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Houston, represented PCHAS at her church's mission fair, and Judy Braselton coordinated PCHAS support at Parkway PC's mission fair in Corpus Christi.

The support PCHAS receives from volunteers and donors during the Christmas season is truly substantial. It is very likely that many more volunteers provided time and gifts which were not reported.

In addition to Christmas celebrations, volunteers were busy with their usual service.

Volunteers for our group homes and Single Parent family programs included Bill and Ellie Abbott, Jamie Buckley, Bobby Clarke, Rachel Davidson, Arlene Hamilton, Travis Hawvermale, Jessica Jurica, Gloria Lewis, Gabrielle Munoz, Kelly Nuzum, Emil Slovacek, and Darlene Stewart. They supported the children and families served by the programs through mentoring individual youth, providing meals to group homes, working with small groups, tutoring, coordinating celebrations, working with the clinical assessment team, providing transportation, working in the garden and covering the reception

desk. These volunteers provide year-round support. This is the kind of service they provide every month.

Our Child and Family programs have regular volunteers also. In December, Ernesto Jimenez provided translation services for the Fort Worth program, Barbara Wood provided office help in Corsicana, and Elizabeth Messer is a volunteer intern with the Wichita Falls program.

Another group of volunteers who provide invaluable service are the Central Office administrative volunteers. In December, they included: Tammy Boehman, Carol Curry, Doris Rome, Virginia Schilz and Kathy Webster.

Finally, a group of volunteers who give countless hours all year include our PCHAS Board of Trustees. At their last meeting of the year, these Board Members were able to participate: Lynn Brooks, Bill Comiskey, Larry Dew, LaRaine DuPuy, Bob Farris, Bob Heselmeyer, Fancy Jezek, Ken Johnson, Gloria Lewis, Sheila Liu, Vance McCracken, John Rush, Ron Scates, Gene Trevino, and Bruce Williams.

Many thanks to all our volunteers for a very good December and a great 2013.

Reported by Rev. Nancy Mossman, Jan. 31, 2014