



# Community Ministry *Newsletter*

August 2023

## HILLCREST HELPING KIDS

**G**et ready!  
August 27 is Pack the Pulpit Day at Hillcrest. We will line the front of the auditorium with backpacks, pencils, paper and other school supplies that will be donated to the Abilene Independent School District's Homeless Education Program.

Hillcrest's own Darrin Cox is the homeless liaison for the district. Almost 1300 of the district's students are classified as "homeless," which is defined as "an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." This includes students who do not live with a parent or guardian, those who are in foster care as well as infants whose parents are classified as homeless.

To enable these children to complete school, Darrin's office provides items like school supplies, clothing, shoes, personal hygiene products, bus passes and laundry vouchers. The materials we collect will replenish supplies that are rapidly depleted as the school year begins.



One of our ministries, Hillcrest Helps, works with families whose needs for transportation, babysitting and childcare extend beyond what the school district can provide.

This ministry, developed from the Safe Families program, consists of five teams of Hillcrest members who

currently work with about 10 families. The Common Ground Bible Class has a monthly collection that is used to help some of these families.

If you would like to be a part of Hillcrest Helps, contact Darrin Cox, Renee Cobarruvias or Nancy Edgar for additional information. ♦

## HillcrestU extends its REACH to Palm House

**O**nce a week, students from the University Ministry partner with Abilene Palm House, at 433 Palm Street, for REACH, a program that builds relationships with children from the Canterbury Crossing Apartments.

We bring snacks and play games with the kids while finding opportunities to pray with them. Abilene Palm House buses kids from these apartments to their ministry



center, where they have a weekly meal and Bible lesson. Hillcrest volunteers our bus to assist with their ministry and sends volunteers.

Extended facetime with some of the children has allowed us to get to know their parents. As a result, some of these children come to our church and participate in events like VBS and VIP.

Palm House is an excellent partner. They provide expertise in working with low-income communities and they give our volunteers valuable training.

We are very thankful for them!

Zach McCartney





Darrin Cox, Melia Lancaster and Kay Istre

## Shoe, coat drive shopping honors Lancaster's mom

**M**elia Lancaster lost her mother, Mona, on July 24, 2022. And it was Betty Davis and Margaret Ivy, Mona's college roommate, who were there to help Melia through her grief.

Last November, Betty asked Melia, "What made your mom really happy?"

"Going shopping!" Melia immediately responded.

So, we decided to go shopping in memory of Mona.

We had heard of Darrin Cox's Winter Coat Drive for the AISD homeless population. We quickly got the word out, and donations started coming in from Melia's friends and extended family, former classmates and people simply wanting to help Melia through the grieving process. The coat drive was a big success.

The Back-to-School Shoe Drive for the AISD homeless population is currently in progress, and Melia is now shopping for school shoes in honor of her mother. A generous donor will even match donated funds for new school shoes up to \$5,000.

Melia would welcome your participation in this project!

*Kay Istre*

## More than just 'Jeans'

**O**peration Blue Jeans is an annual event at the Christian Service Center. Blue jeans, underwear, socks and a pair of tennis shoes – all new – are given to children attending AISD from kindergarten through middle school. Also, this year, backpacks filled with school supplies are being distributed.

Many Hillcrest volunteers are involved with this event. Gail Brown organizes all the items for distribution and keeps everything stocked and ready for each day. Jerry Hayes built cubbies to hold the various sizes of items. The Tuesday morning Ladies Class donated tubs to hold the larger items.

Many other volunteers help sort sizes and bundle items, while others help children find their sizes. It's an exciting time for the children and the parents and guardians are thankful and grateful. It's an opportunity to serve our neighbors in a way that helps them with physical needs while showing them God's love and kindness through our actions. Operation Blue Jeans is funded by donations, without which this project



Glenna Burrow

would not be possible.

If you have a heart for serving and would welcome a chance to be the hands and feet of Jesus, please consider volunteering at the Christian Service Center.

*Glenna Burrow*

## Snack packs help Taylor kids

**S**everal Hillcrest members volunteer each week to deliver snack packs to Taylor Elementary, so my involvement is just a small part of a very large effort to support children in Abilene. Love and Care Ministry coordinates a city-wide effort to receive, sort and distribute the snack packs.

When I volunteer for Taylor Elementary, it doesn't take up much of my time. I would encourage anyone who can carve out an hour in the morning to consider signing up for the delivery of the snack packs to Taylor Elementary.

What does volunteering involve? Driving my truck to Hillcrest to collect the empty containers and dolly, driving to the Love and Care Ministry warehouse on North First Street to exchange the empty containers with full containers,



John and Betty Blakeslee

driving to Taylor to deliver the full containers, loading the empty containers from Taylor Elementary and returning them and the dolly to Hillcrest.

More volunteers are always needed.

*Derek Hood*