

VOLUNTEERS ADAPT DURING COVID-19

People are the heart of The Caring Place. Volunteers are a huge part of that. Prior to the pandemic, on any given day, you could find volunteers sorting and pricing items for our stores, providing superior customer service, merchandising store displays like pros, serving neighbors with food, coordinating information to assist those in need and so much more. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of our volunteers who previously dedicated much of their free time to The Caring Place, found themselves in new territory, spending a great deal more time at home. When COVID-19 shut down our facilities, it also stopped the coming and going of hundreds of volunteers. Once bustling, joyous hallways became a ghost town overnight.

Yet, The Caring Place mission persevered. Our services were more critical than ever to families who experienced sickness, job loss, unexpected expenses, and even death. In order to ensure that critical care continued for those most in need, The Caring Place immediately began operating the Food Pantry in an outdoor drive through run by its staff. It then proceeded to also provide financial assistance in a remote, contactless method by phone while simultaneously opening the doors to its stores gradually and carefully. The hands and hearts of our volunteers were necessary to meet these challenges.

In order to keep the safety of our volunteers and our mission a priority, many of our volunteers found new ways to help:

- They took donated items home to price and sort, simultaneously giving up dining room and garage space to simply do their volunteer work. When they were done, they delivered those items back to us to sell in our thrift stores;
- They sewed masks;
- They took part in remote food distribution;
- They made phone calls and sent thank you cards to donors;
- They stayed updated on Facebook and our website so that they could share accurate information with the community;
- They sent our staff encouraging notes;
- As store and program hours increased, they returned to work, sometimes in new roles; and,
- They waited for considerable periods of time in the donations drive through to make item donations, and many supported us financially.

Our volunteers' dedication to The Caring Place has not gone unnoticed. We had some remarkable hearts with relentless energy encouraging us to move full steam ahead for the past year. Whether they were cheerleading, doing work at home, making generous donations or happily wearing masks as they found their way back to us, their contributions to The Caring Place shined.



The pictures above were taken of volunteers working and cheerleading from a safe distance during 2020.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

The primary goal of Programs & Services at The Caring Place is to meet the needs of neighbors in crisis in a welcoming and caring way with empathy and compassion. To lessen the burden and avoid a snowballing crisis, it's critical to meet these needs as quickly as possible. An increase in families in need during the last few years has given us opportunities to improve how we address the struggles families face. Recent updates in Programs & Services include:

- Increased cross-training for expanded knowledge of all programs;
- New collaborations enabling deeper client engagement for increased sustainability; and,
- Database improvements allowing us to focus on client needs and crisis resolution rather than paperwork.

The Caring Place anticipates these improvements will allow us to provide a higher level of care for our community in the future. Increasing efficiency will allow many of our neighbors to more easily access Case Management services within the organization as well. These Case Management services are an enhancement to our regular programs, which are meant to help fill in the gaps by providing for basic needs like food, clothing, utilities and housing support.



During the past year, Programs & Services staff worked to make asking for assistance both easy and safe for all.



In between contacting neighbors and partners, Staff brainstorm ways to address challenges.



Case Management program activities include:

- Screening clients to assess their compatibility for participation in the program;
- Developing an individualized care plan based on a client's strengths and challenges;
- Coordination of services through community partners to support the individual's plan; and,
- Engaging and empowering neighbors by:
 - Building motivation and confidence for change
 - Practicing the planning and achievement of goals
 - Developing budgeting skills to better manage finances
 - Exercising self-advocacy skills to meet needs
 - Establishing a network of resources

All of these activities impact the ability to establish and maintain household stability.

In 2020, our community experienced something we've never gone through before, a worldwide pandemic. This challenge was the greatest learning opportunity of them all. We had the chance to focus on the most basic of needs for over a year to help neighbors through a valley of the unknown. The Caring Place is now gearing up to fully reopen Programs and Services by late summer. Our neighbors will see that our investment in learning new processes and technology has paid off. Our comprehensive Case Management programs will facilitate the possibility of client-directed, sustainable change to anyone seeking our support.

We are thankful for the many neighbors who have joined us on this journey, teaching us how we can best support them moving forward. We hope to help neighbors reach their goals and improve their quality of life. Thanks to our community, neighbors know The Caring Place is here when support is needed.

LOOK FOR THE HELPERS



Donald McLachlan and Iva Wolf McLachlan

You probably recognize the Wolf name in this community. The Wolf family is an important part of the history and real estate development in Georgetown. Iva Wolf McLachlan was born and raised in Georgetown; her parents made the growing city home over 70 years ago, back when it was a little sleeper. Iva Wolf McLachlan and her husband, Donald McLachlan, have an investment in the community that goes far beyond real estate though. One of the couple's core values is stewardship, and they strive to give back to a town that has given so much to them. Iva shared, "We believe the quality of life in Georgetown is largely defined by the way that we care for one another, particularly those in need. The Caring Place is at the front lines of creating and maintaining that essential quality."

"We believe the quality of life in Georgetown is largely defined by the way that we care for one another, particularly those in need."

During the pandemic, the Wolf McLachlans were especially concerned about people in Georgetown who needed food and other basic necessities of life. They gave to The Caring Place, the Central Texas Food Bank and other charities because they wanted to help those in dire need—especially anyone who needed food during this difficult time. The Wolf McLachlan gift of \$50,000 came at a time when The Caring Place was experiencing reduced store hours and canceled fundraising events. We are thankful for this family and all those families in our community who chose to care for each other this past year. It truly is this community's compassion that makes it extraordinary.

"When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'" - Fred Rogers



AMPLIFY & YOU

On March 5th YOU helped The Caring Place raise a record-breaking \$99,000 during the Amplify campaign. This annual campaign grows each year and with its matching funds and name recognition, it has become a popular and impactful way to help! We are so thankful for all of you who give gifts during this event. How did we do compared to other non-profits? Among over 680 non-profit organizations participating in Central Texas, we came in 12th with the most funds raised! Among basic needs organizations fundraising in 2021, we came in 2nd! These are huge achievements for The Caring Place because it shows that our community believes in us and our mission. Your caring hearts are supporting neighbors in need in Georgetown and northern Williamson County. You prove we are better together. Do you want to get in on the best giving day of the year? We'll be Amplifying again in 2022!



Rita Turner,
Community Engagement
Manager

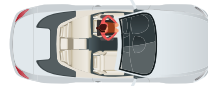
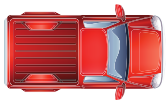
ITEM DONATIONS

One of our big changes this past year was the reduction of hours that our team could receive item donations. Our donation drive through became a safe food distribution method for those in need. Staff found themselves taking on new functions across the organization as we worked to assure a safe environment for all who come to The Caring Place. While we plan to increase donation hours by the end of the summer, we want you to know how grateful we are for your dedication to donating your gently used items to The Caring Place. It hasn't always been easy, sometimes the line was long and sometimes the days felt few, but your commitment and patience are applauded. People like you make a positive difference in our ability to maintain inventory in our stores. Revenue from our stores directly impacts neighbors in need. Thank you for helping!

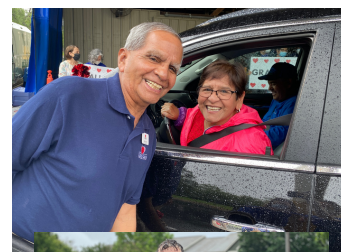


John Burton, Donations Manager

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION



On May 16th, The Caring Place set out to appreciate volunteers during a drive through party! Last year's annual appreciation event was canceled due to COVID-19, so it was long past due to not only show a little appreciation, but see some very missed faces!



This volunteer event produced a lot of rain, but also over 100 joyous volunteers. Staff and Board Members cheered and danced non-stop for this amazing team!



UPDATES

VOLUNTEERS

Thankfully, many of our existing volunteers have rejoined the ranks here at The Caring Place. In the next few months, we foresee more volunteers returning as they become more comfortable with decreasing COVID-19 cases in our community. If you are a current volunteer with The Caring Place and have not already voiced your desire to return, please contact Human Resources Manager, Jim Tillman at jtillman@caringplacetx.org or 512-943-0743. Once our volunteers have had a chance to rejoin us, we will begin accepting new volunteer applications again.

FACILITY

In the next few months, you might see a little dust kicked up at The Caring Place. While we are still distributing food in the 2000 Railroad Avenue drive through, we decided to make improvements to our Food Pantry, Food Pantry Warehouse, Pricing Area and Volunteer Break Area. Here are a few of the behind the scenes updates we will be making this summer to better serve our clients and customers:

- Sink the food scale into the warehouse floor for greater utility and safety;
- Expand the Food Pantry and Food Pantry Warehouse by opening up vacant offices that were used for storage on the first floor of the Administration building. This will also allow us to use the forklift throughout the food storage areas;
- Move the Volunteer Break Area out of the Pricing Warehouse; and,
- Remove walls in our Pricing Warehouse so that we can create more space and allow forklift access throughout the facility.

You can stay updated by following us on Facebook or visiting our website at caringplacetx.org.



MASK POLICY

- Masks remain required for all Staff and Volunteers working inside our facilities. Masks are optional for all guests, including customers.
- Staff and Volunteers who can easily maintain social distancing guidelines while working in our outdoor warehouse may elect to forgo masks.
- Once Williamson County rates COVID-19 as "green" on the community spread scale, The Caring Place will make masks optional for Staff and Volunteers.

HOW TO HELP

- Make online financial donations at caringplacetx.org/donate.
- Learn when to donate your gently used items at caringplacetx.org/donatemystuff.
- Learn about "Shopping for Good" at caringplacetx.org/shop.



SERVICES

The Caring Place is working hard to ensure a full reopening in late summer. While all of our methods and procedures have kept us all safely fulfilling our mission, we are looking forward to more in-person services, interactions and communications with all of you. Some services may look a little different due to the time we've had to enhance processes, but we hope you'll be as excited as we are to see you more often.

Thank you for staying connected with us through this past year. Your support has kept our spirits up and our services flowing to those in need.

"SHOPPING FOR GOOD" ALL SUMMER LONG



We have two thrift stores in Georgetown that offer a wonderful shopping experience. We can help you make this a summer filled with DIY projects, carefully planned décor and a hundred summer reads! Need to refresh that summer wardrobe? Find fashion for all seasons at our Railroad location.

When you shop at The Caring Place, your purchases support our mission. We call that "Shopping for Good."

The Shops at The Caring Place
2000 Railroad Avenue



Second Helping
3700 Williams Drive

Learn more at caringplacetx.org/shop.

The mission of The Caring Place is to provide for the basic human needs of all people in our community in a welcoming, respectful and caring way.



"No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another." — Charles Dickens

Programs & Services
2001 Railroad Avenue, Georgetown
Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Assistance by Phone Only
The Shops at The Caring Place
Thrift Store
2000 Railroad Avenue, Georgetown
Donations
caringplacetx.org/donatemystuff
Second Helping
Thrift Store
3700 Williams Drive, Georgetown
512-987-2998
512-943-0700
caringplacetx.org

P.O. Box 1215
Georgetown, TX 78627-1215

