

# Buckner honors Mrs. Criswell's class\_72803

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**By Heather Price**

*Buckner News Service*

DALLAS-Representatives from Buckner Baptist Benevolences presented the first Circle of Care Award to Mrs. W.A. Criswell and members of her Bible class at First Baptist Church of Dallas June 26.

The presentation was made at Buckner Retirement Village in Dallas.

Mrs. Criswell was honored for 32 years of Christian service and volunteerism at Buckner. Each December, her class hosts a Christmas party for the Village residents. The class provides food and music as well as a hand-wrapped gift for each resident.

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Mrs. W.A. Criswell (seated) and members of her Bible class receive the Circle of Care Award from Buckner Baptist Benevolences.

“We believe there have been 7,500 gifts distributed by this class. That is absolutely phenomenal,” said David Kihneman, executive vice president for Buckner Baptist Benevolences.

The class “contributed to making this a home for the residents,” Kihneman said. “Many seniors do not have family, and (the class) has filled a gap for those folks and made this a special place. They have been a family to them for more than three decades.”

Many residents who have participated in the annual Christmas party attended the celebration. Their gratitude was evident as they waited in line to give Mrs. Criswell hugs.

“It is really a special thing for the residents, and it is a highlight for them,” said Mary Stephens, vice president for Buckner Retirement Services.

Class member Sandy Coates has been volunteering at the retirement village 15 years. She organizes the party, prepares the food and wraps all the gifts.

“This is my biggest gift at Christmas,” she said. “Nothing else matters but

doing the party out here at Buckner. This is God's gift to me by ministering to all the people out here."

Mrs. Criswell received the award presented by Bill Sehnert, chairman of the Village Resident Council.

"We are always blessed when we come," she said. "It was the high day of our lives, and I'm sure the Lord is looking down from heaven and blessing this. We love you, and we want to do more."

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