

Baptist volunteers spend Thanksgiving holiday serving Irving_120604

December 3, 2004

Posted: 12/03/04

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By Leann Callaway

Special to the Baptist Standard

IRVING-For more than a decade, members of Oak View Baptist Church in Irving have spent Thanksgiving "Serving Irving."

Other congregations including Willow Bend Church in Plano and Irving Baptist Fellowship helped with this year's effort, which donated more than 2,000 traditional Thanksgiving meals to 17 apartment complexes throughout the city.

The meals consisted of turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, stuffing, cranberry sauce, green beans, fruit salad and a slice of pie.

Volunteers
(left to right)
Melinda
Connolly,
Adam Jones,
Megan
Connolly and
Dwight
Rottenberg
served meals
at the
Country
Brook
Apartments
in Irving on
Thanksgiving.

This year's outreach was coordinated by Jim Gerlach, Oak View's assistant pastor, and Sergio Matassa, Oak View's minister of missions. "Serving Irving is a great way to meet people in the community and show them we care," he said.

Six teams of volunteers helped with the project.

The promotion team delivered door-knocker flyers in the area around each serving site to let people know of the event.

The pie-baking team baked more than 100 pies of assorted flavors.

The packaging team gathered the supplies that were used at each serving location.

The cooking team began food preparation on Wednesday evening and

finished Thursday morning.

The serving team consisted of 150 volunteers who served the food.

The set-up team loaded tables and chairs and distributed them to the various sites.

“Serving Irving is very helpful to many people out there that have a need, and we can show them that our church cares,” volunteer Barry Newman said. “It's also a great opportunity for young people in our church to understand how to serve and reach out to the community.”

Another volunteer, Nick Kendall, a student at Texas A&M University who was home for the holidays, said, “It is an honor to serve within my church and community.”

All ages volunteer to help with Serving Irving, and many make it a tradition. For several years, David and Becky Staley have been the “chefs” for the service project, and it has taught their daughters Emily and Allison valuable lessons about helping others.

“I like helping people,” 6-year-old Emily said. “Not everyone has a family, and we get to help them.”

“I think some people need a little extra help during the holidays,” 8-year-old Allison said.

Along with providing Thanksgiving meals, the ministry also provides food for the soul.

Volunteers passed out gospel tracts and had opportunities to tell other people about Jesus Christ.

“By helping with Serving Irving, we get to show Christ's love to others,” volunteer Lynn Andrews said.

“I'm thankful that our church serves the community in this way, and I think it shows that our church members have a servant's heart. Everyone was pitching in and giving of themselves.”

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