

Child care homes need houseparents to show love to neglected children_71204

July 9, 2004

Posted: 7/09/04

Child care homes need houseparents to show love to neglected children

By Janelle Bagci

BGCT Summer Intern

Children's homes affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas almost always need houseparents to care for abused, neglected or abandoned children.

Some have even closed due to a lack of volunteers.

Buckner Baptist Benevolences' cottage-style children's homes located in Beaumont, Dallas, the Rio Grande Valley, Lubbock and Midland always need houseparents, said Community Relations Director Amy Garms.

But the most urgent shortage is in Lubbock now, Garms noted.

"We are in need of relief and full-time houseparents," she explained. Volunteers can call (806) 795-7151 for more information.

Parents willing to commit to nurturing wounded children often are in short supply.

One position at Baptist Child & Family Services in San Antonio was left unfilled 18 months.

Parents who volunteer must understand it's like being a missionary, said Bruce Thompson, executive director of the San Antonio campus.

Houseparents have all the responsibilities of other parents-emotional, spiritual and physical-except they serve up to eight children.

They sleep in a separate room attached to the cottage.

Texas Baptist Children's Home in Round Rock retains the majority of its houseparents.

When asked what it does differently from other children's homes, Kevin Dyer, executive director of the Round Rock campus, said: "I think we're just going through one of those periods where God is watching over us."

Although it does not urgently need houseparents currently, Texas Baptist Children's Home has closed facilities in the past due to a lack of houseparents.

The home's recent retention of houseparents may be due to its new practices, Dyer said.

Texas Baptist Children's Home has a different staffing rotation and does not use male houseparents for maintenance or other activities during their time off.

"We encourage them to go play a round of golf to wind down if they need to, because when the kids get home at 4:30, they won't have any free time," Dyer said.

"We love working with the kids," said Marie Vaughn, who, along with her husband, has been working as a houseparent at Texas Baptist Children's

Home since 1983.

"Although we don't always get to see the success stories, ... we like to give a little bit and provide a home for those that don't have one," she said.

"It gets in your blood. We really consider it a ministry."

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.