

HOPE ministry helps fill Christmas stockings for needy Round Rock children_122004

December 10, 2004

Posted: 12/10/04

HOPE ministry helps fill Christmas stockings for needy Round Rock children

By Miranda Bradley

Texas Baptist Children's Home

ROUND ROCK—More than 50 children waited impatiently in a line outside the Chisholm Trail Apartments community center, eager to catch a glimpse of Santa and the toys he had just for them.

The HOPE—Healthy Opportunities that Protect and Empower—program, a community outreach ministry through Texas Baptist Children's Home, sponsored the event that provided stockings to children who otherwise would not have them.

"It's just great for the kids," said Lisa Gallardo, a Chisholm Trail resident and former client of the children's home's family care program. "My son didn't have a stocking, so this really helps for the holidays."

Texas
Baptist
Children's
Home's
HOPE
program
partnered
with
Austin
Young
Women's
League to
provide
filled
Christmas
stockings
for
children
who
otherwise
might
have
gone
without
ay
Christmas
treats.

But these were more than plain stockings. They were handmade by volunteers and embroidered with each child's name.

"These things are just jam-packed with stuff," said Melanie Martinez,

HOPE program supervisor. “For the babies, they have rattles and teethers. For the older girls, they are filled with hairspray and perfume. Everyone just put a lot of thought into this.”

Teaming up with HOPE for the first time was Austin Young Women’s League, a Christian service organization that helped coordinate the event.

“I feel awesome,” said Cindy Hathaway, president of the league. “There’s nothing better than doing something like this for kids who need it.”

Once inside the doors of the community center, children were given a cookie and a Bible. Then they decorated their own sugar cookies while watching a puppet show about the true story of Christmas.

“We wanted to find a way to share Christ with the children that they could relate to and understand,” Hathaway said.

Before leaving, children spent some time with Santa and received their personalized stockings.

Christy Hackney, a former TBCH family care program client, let her 6-month-old open his stocking early.

“He really likes the rattle that was inside,” she said. “I like the stockings a lot.”

“Yeah, it’s great to have the extra support,” said Gallardo, who met Hackney while they were in family care together. “It makes it easier when you don’t feel like you’re all alone.”

Many organizations pitched in to help with the event, and Hathaway believes they were God’s instruments.

“God is good,” she said. “What has happened here today is people are sincerely giving from the heart, and that comes from their love of Christ.”

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.