

Church opens its doors to students after school

December 1, 2006

Posted: 12/01/06

Church opens its doors to students after school

By George Henson

Staff Writer

CHRISTOVAL—Doug Hurt believes ministry involves meeting needs. Because his church shares that commitment, the children of Christ-oval now have a place to go after the school day ends.

“We’re primarily a bedroom community, and most of the people who live here drive in to San Angelo to work,” Hurt explained.

“But here in Christoval, there was no place for their children to go. A few individuals would take in children, but there was no licensed place for children to go after school. Some went so far as to take their children out of Christoval schools and enroll them in San Angelo.”

To meet that need, Christoval Baptist Church, where Hurt is pastor, began an after-school program last fall. The church averaged eight or nine children as the community became aware of the ministry.

“We were happy with that,” said Diana Clendenin, assistant director of the program.

“We were ministering to children and their families, many of them who didn’t go to our church, and we were happy with that.”

This year, an average of 22 children are at the church, right across the street from the school, each weekday afternoon.

“It takes a little time for the community to realize that you’re there, that you’re viable, that you’re going to stick around,” Clendenin said.

About half the children each day are preschoolers or kindergarteners.

“But the really neat thing is that all of our kids really want to be there. Sometimes if their parents come to pick them up early, they’re not ready to go yet. It’s nice that the church is a place they want to be,” she said.

Some of the children stick around for church activities, especially for Wednesday night AWANAs, Hurt said.

“It’s been a great outreach for us in the community,” he said.

“That wasn’t our original focus, but it has worked out that way. A few families have even started coming on Sunday mornings.”

In a community the size of Christoval, population 450, it wasn’t like the congregation was a secret. It’s the biggest church in town, so everyone has known where it was, Hurt noted.

But he believes the after-school program may be causing people in the community to view the church in a little different light.

“It has made our community aware that we want to do more than have church on Sunday—that we really want to meet needs—that we really care about them,” he said.

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.