

# **Dell volunteers staff festival for children & families in need**

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**By Miranda Bradley**

*Children at Heart Foundation*

ROUND ROCK—More than 200 [Dell](#) employees pitched in to sponsor the third annual Dell Fall Festival for children and families served by [Texas Baptist Children's Home](#) and [STARRY](#).

“We’re always blessed by Dell’s involvement in our ministries,” Texas Baptist Children’s Home Executive Director [Keith Dyer](#) said of the computer firm. “Their contribution to our children and families is immeasurable.”

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A TBCH resident enjoys his cotton candy during the third annual Dell Fall Festival, which company employees sponsor strictly for children and families served by TBCH and STARRY.

The festival represents one of several volunteer projects involving the child and family services agency and Dell employees recently. In September, more than 560 Dell team members donated their time, money and work to the ministry. Projects included scraping and painting exterior and interior campus walls, landscaping and fulfilling wish lists.

“They are very dedicated, hardworking people who truly believe in what we do,” said Brenda Gilbert, volunteer coordinator at Texas Baptist Children’s Home. “It’s a pleasure to host them on our campus.”

The Dell Fall Festival was the brainchild of a Dell team three years ago. They wanted to provide one day of play for families and children in care. It has grown into a carnival atmosphere, complete with a mini-train ride, petting zoo, cakewalk, inflatable bounce houses and rock-climbing wall.

“This is awesome,” one STARRY resident said. “It’s like Christmas without Santa.”

Each child who participated in games received tickets redeemable for toys and other prizes at the end of the day. Dell volunteers cooked hamburgers and hot dogs and provided drinks alongside cotton candy, snow-cones and popcorn.

“It’s an amazing display of support for our kids,” STARRY Executive Director Don Forrester said. “The festival really gives our families a chance to forget about their worries for a little while and just enjoy each other.”

STARRY and Texas Baptist Children’s Home, both located in Round Rock, are part of Children at Heart Ministries, which cares for children and families in need. Texas Baptist Children’s Home consists of family care, a residential program for single mothers and their children; campus life, which provides a Christian home-like setting for displaced children; and HOPE—Healthy Opportunities that Protect and Empower, a community outreach program for needy families.

STARRY provides care through emergency shelter, a residential program for children removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect; foster care, which provides a temporary home for children leaving a shelter; and counseling, which provides services and programs at no charge.

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