

# Baptist volunteers spread cheer by ‘Serving Irving’

November 30, 2007

Posted: 11/30/07

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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.” Willow Bend Baptist Church in Plano also helped this year to provide more than 2,000 traditional Thanksgiving meals to apartment complexes throughout the city.

Sergio Matassa, Oak View’s minister of missions, coordinated the outreach ministry. Six teams of volunteers helped with the project.

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Volunteer  
Alyssa Raley  
serves meals  
to a family on  
Thanksgiving  
at The Raible  
Place  
Apartments in  
Irving.  
(Photos/Leann  
Callaway)

The promotion team hung flyers on doorknobs throughout the area around each serving site to let people know of the event. The pie-baking team baked more than 200 pies of assorted flavors. The packaging team gathered for each serving location.

The cooking team began food preparation on Wednesday evening and finished Thanksgiving morning. After Angelo's Restaurant in Irving closed Wednesday night, the cooking team was allowed to use its facility to prepare meals.

A serving team of 150 volunteers served the food, and a set-up team loaded tables and chairs and distributed them to the various sites.

All ages volunteer to help with Serving Irving, and many make it a tradition. Many young couples said this project has taught their children valuable lessons about helping others.

"We try to set an example for our children and teach them to appreciate what we have and to see what the rest of the world is like," said John Woodard, who volunteered with his wife Randi and two sons, Corey, 8, and Caleb, 5.

“I’m excited because we got to help people who needed food for Thanksgiving, and they got to hear about God,” 6-year-old Kamryn Bingham said.

Along with providing Thanksgiving meals, the ministry also provides food for the soul. Volunteers had opportunities to tell people about Jesus Christ while passing out Bibles and gospel tracts.

“We just feel incredibly blessed in our life, and we feel like it’s our responsibility as Christians to share Christ’s love with the world,” said Joy Hale, who volunteered with her husband Charlie and two daughters, Bailee, 8, and Ellie, 6.

“I help with Serving Irving so people will know that God loves them,” Bailee Hale said.