

Around the State: Buckner opens retirement community; Truett Seminary receives Lilly grant

November 26, 2019

Buckner Senior Living marked the grand opening of Dallas' first luxury high-rise [Continuing Care Retirement Community](#) with a ribbon-cutting ceremony Nov. 21. Construction of [Ventana by Buckner](#) began in June 2017. The first residents began moving in Aug. 19 this year. Guests of honor at the ribbon-cutting ceremony included chef **Stephan Pyles**, who is consulting on Ventana's dining experience, and **Dr. Kenneth Cooper**, founder of the Cooper Aerobics Center, which oversees Ventana's health and wellness facilities and programming. Ventana also collaborates with Baylor Scott & White Health to provide medical and spiritual care services. The \$140 million Ventana project features adjacent 12-story towers that house 189 independent-living residences ranging from 950 to 2,000 square feet. Also included within Ventana's vertical living community are 38 assisted-living residences, 48 nursing apartments and 26 memory-care residences. The community includes the full continuum of care for senior adults with assisted living, nursing care, memory care and a rehabilitation component.

Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary received a \$300,000 sustainability grant from the Lilly Endowment to continue a program to identify and cultivate youth who will become leaders in church and society. The Faith & Sport Institute retreat is part of an initiative begun in 1998 with Lilly Endowment's Theological Programs for High School Youth. It received a \$600,000 grant from Lilly Endowment in 2015. Organizers note

the Faith & Sport Institute retreat program provides a unique annual experience within a diverse community, using a weeklong mentor-guided retreat setting that engages and forms religious teenagers to become discerning, vibrant leaders in sports, church and beyond. At the retreat, participants study and interact with Faith & Sport Institute faculty, share meals, meet with their mentors, discuss moral and social issues specific to sports and life, learn leadership skills, practice spiritual disciplines, serve with Mission Waco and join in other immersion experiences and competitive sports-virtue labs. **John B. White**, associate professor of practical theology and faculty director of the Faith & Sport Institute, noted the grant will help enable faculty researchers to “use validated research instruments to assess the quality of our immersion experience’s outcomes so that our published conclusions will resource the academy, the church and sports culture.”



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East Texas Baptist University and Louisiana College’s annual rivalry game on Nov. 16 also provided an opportunity to help needy individuals in central Louisiana. To help stock Louisiana College’s Blessing Box, the ETBU Tiger football team delivered 13 boxes of non-perishable food items, and football fans from both schools gained free admission to Wildcat Field with the donation of canned goods. Individuals in need in Pineville, La., are free to take goods from Louisiana College’s Blessing Box, which routinely is

stocked with items donated by students, faculty and community members.

Eight independent, self-sustaining students from Abilene who lack family support currently are attending Hardin-Simmons University with their tuition paid by sponsors through the university's Christlieb program. The HSU office of student engagement also works to ensure they are aware of their access to free counseling, tutoring, mentoring and career services. HSU President **Eric Bruntmeyer** worked with the university's board of trustees and its admissions and advancement offices to launch the Christlieb—Christ's love—program. The program provides full tuition each academic year for students who qualify, leaving the remaining funds students receive from their FAFSA for housing, meal plans and textbooks. The program honors the vision of the school's founder, James B. Simmons, who asked that it be named Christlieb College—the college of Christ's love. In the 2018-19 academic year, seven students benefited from the Christlieb program. "My hope is that we can be these students' forever family," Bruntmyer said. "This is a way for us to stand in the gap. We want to be the hands and feet of Christ as we serve the fatherless." The Christlieb Program is funded completely by sponsors. For more information, call (325) 670-1260, email advancement@hsutx.edu or [click here](#).



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student-athletes, many of whom arrived at the wrapping party dressed in Christmas pajamas and sweaters to fill and wrap boxes.

As part of the Samaritan's Purse national collection week for its [Operation Christmas Child](#) program, East Texas Baptist University's Tiger Athletics program held its fourth annual Operation Christmas Child wrapping party on Nov. 18. All of ETBU's 16 NCAA Division III and five club sports participated by donating toys and personal care items for children ages 2 to 14. Tiger Athletics collected more than 200 gift boxes for boys and girls through donations from at least 400 student-athletes, many of whom arrived at the wrapping party dressed in Christmas pajamas and sweaters to fill and wrap boxes.

This semester, students at the Patty Hanks Shelton School of Nursing—a consortium of Hardin-Simmons University and McMurry University—began volunteering with Camp Able, a therapeutic riding nonprofit in Buffalo Gap. Camp Able's mission is to cultivate healthy, independent living for people with special needs through equine-assisted therapy and skills-based training. Camp Able has a long history of offering programs to middle school and high school students in Clyde and Jim Ned. This year, Camp Able began offering a group session for young adults with special needs. To accommodate this growth, Camp Able developed a partnership with the nursing school.

Three ministers with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa recently attended a luncheon with Hardin-Simmons University administrators and met with representatives from several departments on the HSU campus. It marked the latest development in an ongoing relationship between HSU and Christians in Kenya. In May, several HSU leaders traveled to Kenya to meet with the deputy governor, director of social services, and chief officer

of medical services of Kajiado County, Kenya. During the summer, the HSU cross-country team also traveled to Kenya to train with world-renowned Kenyan runners and participate in a community service project, aiding children with disabilities. During the cross-country trip, representatives from HSU's department of physical therapy explored possible mission trip opportunities for 2020. Both the physician assistant and nursing programs also are exploring international mission work in Kenya.