

Bedford church gives needy children reason to jump for joy

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BEDFORD—[First Baptist Church in Bedford](#) hopes the Jump for Joy Festival—its collaborative project with the Hurst-Euless-Bedford school district—causes needy children to do just that.

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Pastor Marty Akins of First Baptist Church in Bedford talks about the church's Jump for Joy Festival.

The festival began four years ago after the school district asked if the congregation could raise money to help underprivileged children.

The Jump for Joy Festival brought in more than \$3,000 that first year, and the 2009 goal was \$10,000.

Headliners for the day are the multiple bounce houses and other inflatables set up on the church's back lot. Indoors, church members display donated items as part of a silent auction that continues throughout the Saturday event.

Also, in the church gym, volunteers offer carnival games and staff a food court where children can buy treats.

All the money raised from the food, games and auction go to the school district to help needy children.

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First Baptist Church in Bedford's Jump for Joy Festival.

To keep a steady flow of visitors coming throughout the day and to give

children an opportunity to display their talents, school musical groups perform at scheduled intervals. Performers include choirs, a string orchestra of elementary-age students and a group learning ballroom dancing.

The event requires almost 100 volunteers to coordinate, Pastor Marty Akins said.

“Hundreds, if not thousands, of hours go into the preparation, planning and implementation” of the event, he said.

Not only do volunteers from the church and school district make the Jump for Joy Festival a success, a Boy Scout Troop and an Alcoholics Anonymous group that meet at the church also help, he added.

“It really is becoming a community event in which we focus on the children who need Christmas and especially need the Christ of Christmas,” Akins said.

Church leaders hope their investment in the event communicates something larger to the community.

“Our church is committed to being a viable part of the community—not just as we pray, but certainly as we care for them and as we share with them the hope and reason for the season, who is the Jesus Christ,” he said.