

Kids' Club feeds New Braunfels students—body, mind and spirit

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NEW BRAUNFELS—Kids' Club in New Braunfels not only provides academic tutoring for struggling students from a dozen elementary schools, but also meets physical and spiritual needs.

Volunteers mentor and tutor at-risk students from nine New Braunfels Independent School District elementary schools at the ministry's main campus, and they provide on-site programs at three schools in the Comal ISD. All services are provided at no cost to students.

"The program is different from other ministries in that Kids' Club mentors the whole child—body, mind, and spirit," said Staci Osterkamp, communication coordinator for [New Braunfels Christian Ministries](#).

"The organization provides food to help bodies grow healthy. Due to mentoring and tutoring, students are equipped to succeed academically. And through the investment of volunteers and chapel time, the love of Christ is shared with students."

Brett Mosher, pastor of community ministries at Oakwood Baptist Church in New Braunfels, is executive director of New Braunfels Christian Ministries, and Ray Still, senior pastor at Oakwood Baptist, chairs the non-profit organization's board of directors.

Providing meals for children



The Texas Baptist Hunger Offering helps New Braunfels Christian Ministries serve meals to 268 Kids' Club participants and provide fresh fruit for snacks. (Photo courtesy of New Braunfels Christian Ministries)

In addition to Kids' Club, New Braunfels Christian Ministries also operates a food pantry and a clinic that provides free medical and dental services to uninsured individuals. The organization launched [Kids' Club](#) in 2006 after learning about a similar program in Chicago.

More than three-fourths of the students in Kids' Club qualify for the free lunch program at school, based on family income. Many of the children live in food-insecure households.

Together with financial support provided by area churches, organizations and businesses, the [Texas Baptist Hunger Offering](#) helps New Braunfels Christian Ministries serve meals to 268 Kids' Club participants and provide fresh fruit for snacks.

Before meals and in tutoring classrooms, the Kids' Club program coordinator or assistant coordinator leads children in prayer.

Volunteers make an impact



Volunteer Vera Gunn helps a Kids' Club student with homework. (Photo courtesy of New Braunfels Christian Ministries)

Currently, 133 volunteers from about two dozen churches and local businesses serve with Kids' Club. Some provide transportation, serve meals or deliver food to the students involved in Kids' Club programming offered at their schools.

"Buddies" work one-on-one with students, reading with them or helping with math homework. Other volunteers work in small groups as "PALS"—people who agree to be present, available, loving and supportive.

"Because of their investment, our students are empowered to reach their full potential through Jesus Christ," Osterkamp said.

Beth Lane and Genie Burrows each have volunteered with Kids' Club the past three years.

"You think you're coming to help others, and you end up with the blessings," Lane said. "And making a difference in a child's life is just so important."

Burrows emphasized the minimal time commitment by volunteers compared to the potential influence on children.

“You come in, and you impact a child.,” she said. “You never know what that two hours is going to do—that one little kid that you listen to. ...You bring joy, and you get to share the gospel.”

‘I learn to trust God’

Kiyarah, a fifth grader, has been part of Kids’ Club since she was in the first grade.

“At Kids’ Club, I learn to trust God and bring him into my heart,” she said. “I love Kids’ Club so much that I wish I can come here forever.”

Another fifth grader, Arnie, said, “When I grow up, I want to volunteer at Kids’ Club.”

School administrators also attest to the positive effect Kids’ Club has on students.

“Kids’ Club is truly a blessing for so many of our students. The help that our students receive in homework is so valuable in their success at school,” said Deborah Cary, principal at Voss Farms Elementary School.

“I cherish the relationship that our school has with Kids’ Club and the impact they have on our students each week.”

Carolyn Tomlin writes for the Christian market and teaches the Boot Camp for Christian Writers.

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