

# UMHB students offer helping hands to Helping Hands

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Belton, TX - At the Helping Hands community ministry center, volunteers regularly stock shelves, sort clothes, sweep and paint, but with little manpower available, much more goes undone.

More than 200 students from the [University of Mary Hardin-Baylor](#) recently pitched in to collectively offer more than 600 hours of community service. Reaching Out, a biannual event, gives places like Helping Hands a boost by giving regularly scheduled volunteers time to focus on other jobs.

Kimberly Pointer, Helping Hands assistant director, anticipates arrival of UMHB students each semester.

University of Mary  
Hardin-Baylor junior  
education major Hannah  
Miller rolls paint on the  
wall at Helping Hands  
during the school's  
biannual Reaching Out  
community service  
emphasis.  
(PHOTO/Brent  
Richardson/UMHB)

"I depend on it twice a year. Sometimes I let projects that needed to be done for a month pile up for those days," she said.

In one Saturday, 20 students painted walls, organized the clothing locker,

scrubbed floors and performed general maintenance around the building.

Reaching Out provides local residents evidence of youth investing in the area.

“The comment I get from the seniors is, ‘It is so good that the young people come out and do this. They are not just taking and expecting but giving to the community of Belton, which is a blessing,’” Pointer said.

As students make contacts and see firsthand how a little time makes a big difference, the event acts as a starting point to encourage them to become regular volunteers beyond the one-day event.

UMHB junior accounting major Angie Lara said her first exposure to the service project encouraged her to seek a consistent hands-on position.

“My first Reaching Out experience was wonderful, and afterwards I actually went through training on how to become a regular volunteer,” she said, noting she serves on a regular basis at Helping Hands.

UMHB junior class Chaplain Tommy Wilson, a Reaching Out student coordinator, said the one-day emphasis encourages students to serve more than a few hours and make it a lifestyle.

“That is one of the hopes of this, that students would hit it off with different things and continue in acts of service. Understanding it is more than just a one Saturday event,” he said.

As temporary Belton residents, he thinks students have a responsibility to the area.

“It is more than just, ‘We did our community service,’ but, ‘I understand my responsibility to the community, and it is part of building my home here,’” Wilson said.

UMHB senior mass communication major Katelyn Dean, a veteran Reaching Out attendee, finds the event to be mentality relieving from her busy days. She said participating is easy, because she can just show up and help out.

“It is a great way to give back to the community. All of us have hectic schedules at school whether it is clubs, organizations or being a residence assistant, but this is our time to strictly focus on the community’s needs,” Dean said.