

Waco Community Development

"Helping to inspire and cultivate healthy neighborhoods."

January 2013



A Powerful and Humble Leader

By: Ryn Farmer



"I believe I have a special calling on my life to be an example of His love to other people." These were the sincere words of a local pastor during a recent conversation I had in the community. East Waco is filled with incredible pastors who have the passion, knowledge and skills to lead their congregations into fellowship with each other and demonstrate what it is to be a good neighbor to the surrounding community. One such pastor, Dr. Willie E. Clarke, has served our community for the past five years. He is the Senior Pastor at Pleasant Olive Missionary Baptist Church. He said his favorite part about being a pastor there is "...interacting with God's people" and letting his light shine bright enough to encourage them. Recently, he received the Citizen of the Year award from the Central Texas African American Chamber of Commerce at their awards banquet. Pastor Clarke emanates joy and compassion and immediately puts you at ease. He is not afraid to be honest but does so with humility. He says of Pleasant Olive Church, "It is a beacon and a light on the hill to our community." What a joy it is to serve alongside Dr. Clarke and our other East Waco pastors who desire holistic change for the community and work daily with others to make a difference.

Downtown Waco Farmer's Market

By Gabriela Gatlin

It was wonderful to see so many of you at the Waco Downtown Farmer's Market on December 8th. Not only can you buy fresh foods and artisan crafts and enjoy a tasty snack while listening to local musicians at the farmer's market, but you can also learn about a Waco non-profit organization each week at the community organization booth. Waco Community Development hosted the booth on December 8th, and we'll be back again on February 9th and April 13th. We hope you'll stop by and visit us! The Waco Downtown Farmer's Market is located at 400 S. University Parks Drive and is open every Saturday from 9am until 1pm.

*** For the First Time, WCD is
Now Accepting Online & Credit Card Donations
Support Us Today!**

CALENDAR

Classes

2013 Financial Literacy
6-8 PM for 6 weeks
Next class series
begins March 7th

Homebuyer Education II
Next class will begin
January 26th
1-6 PM

8th Annual Golf Scramble
April 26, 2013
Hole Sponsorship \$100
Corporate Sponsorship \$500

MEMORIALS

In memory of Bob Gatlin
given by
Mr. & Mrs. Marshall Byford

Honorariums

In Honor of Johnny Mankin
given by
James & Judy Haller

Board of Directors:

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Carol Dugat
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Walt Keeler
Johnny Mankin
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The newsletter of Waco Community Development whose mission is to help inspire and cultivate healthy neighborhoods throughout Waco.

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God's House

By: Mike Stone

"I am so excited. I get my house! I get my house!" said Ms. Williams as she sang and danced around her chair. I was walking into the room for the closing on her house. Ms. Williams turned to see me and came over and gave me a big hug. Debbie Rhodes, the lender, and Phyllis Alexander, the closer, were both smiling.

"Welcome to the party," said Phyllis. "These are the closings that make my day."

"It makes my day when I get to help someone like Ms. Williams buy her home" said Debbie.

Ms. Williams was signing the papers to become a homeowner. She had worked hard saving up to pay off her debts. She had saved up additional money for her Individual Development Account (IDA) and more money to help reduce the payment on her house.

We started signing papers, and when Phyllis said, "This is the payment for your house," Ms. Williams got excited again and jumped and danced around her chair. "Oh! I am just so excited!"

After signing the large stack of papers, Ms. Williams got up and started crying and praying out loud. "Lord, you told me to be patient and I would get my house. I listened to you and you took care of me. Thank you Lord for this gift and thank you for sending these people to help me with the process. This is your house and I dedicate it to you."

What an honor and privilege it was to be witness to this closing.

Great Ending to a Great Year

By: JoEllen Baiza



One woman brought tears to my eyes during her "Welcome to the Neighborhood Party". At the end of the program, Mike asked her if she had a few words she wanted to share, and she said, "I didn't think this would ever be possible but now that it is, it brings me great happiness to see my kids so at home here and so proud of what I could do as their mother." I am so glad that she is one of our amazing neighbors in our Near Northside community.

During my time at Waco Community Development, I have watched five wonderful families focus on making the changes needed to accomplish their goal of owning their own home. Every one of them holds a very special place in my heart, watching each one of them come in week after week to sort things out with their housing counselor. Sometimes I see their initial disappointment when they realize the time that it takes to actually close on a home. Buying a home takes work; there are steps that must be followed from clearing off old debts to establishing new credit and cutting expenses to make these changes. This can make things seem tight for a while, but in the end their prize is a house key to a home and more financial education. These individuals are our neighbors. May every good deed never go unseen.

Free Tax Preparation Sites:

NeighborWorks Waco

922 Franklin
(254) 752-1647
Tuesday—Friday
11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Starting January 29
Ending April 12

Providence Hospital

Young Tower, Rm. 6
(254) 751-4000 ext. 2665
Monday & Wednesday
12:30 to 4:30 p.m.
Starting February 4
Ending April 10

South Waco Community Ctr.

2815 Speight
(254) 750-8650
Monday & Wednesday
1:00 to 5:00 p.m.
Starting January 4
Ending March 13

What To Bring With You:

- **2012 Income or IRS Documentation:**
 - W-2, 1099
 - Real Estate tax paid in 2012, 1098
 - Self employment Income / Expenses
- **Official Photo ID:**
 - Driver's License, State Issued Photo ID, Student ID, Passport
- **Social Security Card**
 - One for each tax payer, and each claimed dependent

West Waco Library

5301 Bosque
(254) 745-6018
Tuesdays
4 p.m.— 8 p.m.
Saturday
10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Starting January 24
Ending April 15

A.J. Moore Academy

3201 S. New Road
(254) 458-0064
Monday, Tuesday & Thursday
5:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Starting January 24

Heart of Texas Goodwill

1700 S. New Road
(254) 753-7337
Monday & Thursday
4:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Starting January 28
Ending April 15

Hewitt Community Center

208 Chama
(254) 666-2442
Tuesday & Thursday
Noon to 5:00 p.m.
Starting February 5
Ending April 11

I want to be in my home for Christmas!

By: Darrell Abercrombie

She had worked hard for the last several months getting everything she needed to be in her house by Christmas. She finally got the approval to get her loan from the mortgage company. She began to move in and got so excited that she forgot to have some of her services transferred to the new address. She found a refrigerator that had all of the things she wanted, including an ice and water dispenser. It cost more than a normal refrigerator, but it was her first house and she wanted the very best.



The store delivered her new refrigerator, and in her excitement she went to the grocery store to stock up. Later on that evening she went into the kitchen to discover that the refrigerator was not working. The ice cream had melted and was running into the compartment at the bottom where the vegetables were stored.

She gave the store a call to inform them that their top of the line refrigerator did not work. The technician asked her to open the refrigerator door and see if the light would come on. She opened the door and no light came on. The technician said, "I don't understand. Put your ear up close to the refrigerator and tell me if you can hear the hum of the motor." There was no hum. He then said, "There's a cord at the back of your refrigerator. Please check to see it is connected." She looked in the back of the refrigerator and the cord was not plugged in.

We are just like appliances, we are dependent in nature. Although we have all the necessary parts we need to make it in life, we were created like the refrigerator to have a power source. The refrigerator was manufactured in such a way that it will not operate without the invisible power source of electricity. We will not work properly without our power source, the Holy Spirit.

This Christmas we remembered that there would be no Christmas without Christ. Christmas is about God's gift to us and if we are not connected to His gift, we will miss out on our power source!



World Changers will be in Waco July 8 -12, 2013

This year projects will involve external home repairs such as siding, ramps, stairs, painting. The time to apply is NOW!



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Waco, TX 76707

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neighborhoods.*

The Lasting Spirit of Christmas

By: Alexis Christensen

Keisha Raymond walked shyly out of her 2nd grade classroom at Brook Avenue Elementary, looking at the ground. Prompted by her teacher, she repeated what she had said in the classroom. Keisha, holding onto her bag filled with treasures—gloves, books and fruit, looking up asked, “Who brought these presents to us? I want to thank them.” Ms. Leeann Allen, the counselor at Brook Avenue, replied with a giant smile, “The Providence Healthcare Network and their volunteer corps.” Keisha, now grinning, looked them in the eye, and said, “Thank you.”

Across the way, students at West Avenue Elementary wait patiently and anxiously for their picture with Santa. The students stand on their tiptoes trying to get a glimpse of Santa himself. When you take a good look at this Santa, you realize it’s one of our own neighbors, Mark Castellano, who has volunteered to play Santa for the past couple of years at West Avenue. “I like being at the school and volunteering. It’s fun to help out in any way that I can,” Mark says.

These stories show how much our community cares about our schools and how important community-school relationship is to the school staff, the kids and their families. December 25 may have come and gone but the spirit of the holidays lives on in our community members, Adopt-a-School partners, parents, grandparents, teachers and administration. As we surround our schools, we surround the very people we are called to partner with to see our neighborhoods thrive.



BY THE NUMBERS

Housing:

Homeowners: 187
New Homes: 46
Renovated: 16

Opportunities:

Counseled: 1,678
Active: 93

Maintenance:

Volunteers: 6,124
Vol. Hours: 44,465
Lots Mowed: 2,381