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# THE *upbeat* REPORTER

FALL 2023



Acts Community  
Another Chance House  
Blankets of Love  
High Plains Food Bank  
Sister-Bear Foundation

*Love*  
means  
*Meeting Needs*

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# THE *upbeat* REPORTER

*A Note from the Publisher*



*Mary Kay Kuhrts*

## ***“Love Means Meeting Needs”***

I heard those words the first time in 2001 from retired Pastor Larry Mills, pastor of the Buchanan Street Chapel. In the early days of the Upbeat Reporter (1999-2003), I received an advertising call from the Christian Women’s Job Corps (CWJC), which was operating out of the Buchanan Street Chapel. While visiting with the Director of CWJC, I mentioned that a group of out-patient clients of Texas Panhandle Centers were searching for a place to start a peer support center. She directed me to Pastor Larry Mills, who after hearing the plight of the group, told me . . .

***“Love means meeting needs,  
and this is a need that needs to be met.”***

Pastor Larry showed me the available space in the church, and soon after, The Agape Center for Amarillo Area Mental Health Consumers was opened. This experience with the Agape Center inspired me to pursue work in several non-profit organizations until the relaunch of the Upbeat Reporter in June of 2019.

The Amarillo area is blessed to have many great non-profit organizations, all doing their best in meeting needs according to their passion. A seed was planted in me by Pastor Mills many years ago, and I have been inspired to work toward increasing awareness about the individuals and organizations in our area who are meeting the needs of others. In this issue we are highlighting organizations who are helping with senior needs, homelessness, food insecurity, and neurological disabilities.

We are now in our fifth year of providing in-depth stories like the one about Transformation Park, written by Upbeat contributing author, Amy Crowley, in the Spring 2023 issue.

According to one of our readers:

“On a recent Sunday, I drove to 6th Street for a “look-see” at the Transformation Park when the construction crews wouldn’t be there. I entered from the East and drove West on 5th Street. Then, about a week later, in an office reception area, I saw an ‘Upbeat Reporter’ magazine with your article. It has more and better information than I had previously found by googling.”

I hope you enjoy the stories in this issue and are inspired by the ways so many are stepping up to show love by meeting the needs of others.





## 16 FEATURE

**It's Called Another Chance House, Not Second Chance, or Last Chance, Another Chance**



## 6 FEATURE

**They Had No Need - Acts Community**



## 28 FEATURE

**Hope from Tragedy: The Sister-Bear Foundation**

- 6 | They Had No Need
- 10 | Live Boldly
- 14 | Curve Balls
- 16 | It's Called Another Chance ...
- 20 | Planting Seeds
- 24 | Wrapped in Love
- 28 | Hope from Tragedy: The Sister-Bear Foundation
- 33 | The Seed of Leadership

## contributors

- Karen Benckenstein
- Tina Brohlin
- Amy Crowley
- Dr. Aaron Hunt
- Tammi Scoggin
- Sharon Miner

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### UPBEAT REPORTER

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### ON OUR COVER

Sunset photo courtesy of: Eddie Tubbs, Mountain Sands Photography



# They Had No Need.



*"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need."*  
Acts 3:42

Chad Conner has such a deep understanding of this passage of scripture, he made it a reality. As founder and executive director of **Acts Community**, Chad's dream was to create a community that operated like the one in the Book of Acts in the Bible. A community where the people looked after each other. "The community in Acts had no need because of the way they lived. They were a group of people who were sold out to Jesus and cared for one another giving everything they had to the ministry and to each other. Hunger didn't happen because the community didn't allow it to happen," he remarked.

For Chad, community has a special meaning. At age 21 he moved to Las Vegas from Amarillo and found himself struggling with the challenges of addiction. The Lord saved him and brought him through.



*"Hunger didn't happen because the community didn't allow it to happen."*

Chad Conner  
Founder/Executive Director



By Sharon Miner

Sharon is the director of development and public relations for Martha's Home. She has worked with homeless women and women in recovery for over 20 years. Her professional career includes politics, business and non-profit organizations.



During the journey he realized how important his community was in helping him move past all the negativity and into sobriety from the decade of darkness. When he turned to the Lord, He was right there. His family, friends, and church were all a part of the community that helped him as he stumbled through life and figured it out.

*"Community means more to me than most people because it was my community that saved me. It was the love, support, and acceptance from a group of people who knew I was broken."*



*"We host a weekly Bible Study, and offer the sanctuary as a peaceful place of refuge during open hours."*

They embraced me and I could not be where I am today if it were not for the people who stood by me in my time of need," he said speaking from a deep place in his heart. "I felt I needed to be that for other people. The desire to start Acts Community comes from a place of experience, not just an idea or a goal, but I came through it and wanted to be someone who could be that branch to offer to other people."

Acts Community started in 2013 in a building in the San Jacinto area in Amarillo. The goal was to be a life line to the community and meet some of the needs that Jesus said to just go do. Chad admits he had no idea what he was doing. He just knew it had always been a desire of his heart to make the city better.

Seven years ago, Chad and his team realized the senior population was an underserved group, and a lunch program was created at the San Jacinto location. Chad stated, "We quickly learned the food is important, but the fellowship was the key to their heart. That revelation came through a lady named Shirley, who visited our center. She had no friends or family, weighed 87 pounds and was battling cancer. At the time of her passing, we had to rent a bus to escort all her friends she had made at **Acts Community** to attend her funeral services. It was at that point I realized the impact Acts Community could have in creating deep relationships. Yes, Shirley was hungry, but most of all she was lonely and that is what was killing her."

In 2022 Acts Community bought a 50,000 sq ft building at 816 S. Van Buren where the senior activity center is now located. About 5000 sq ft has been renovated and opened in May of 2023 for senior lunch program and activities.

When we think of needs, we often think of physical needs. But sometimes the need is emotional and spiritual. Acts Community created a place where people can make friends, laugh, have fun, share birthdays, and have the hard conversations about life.



*"We have daily community activities like Bingo, Stretching Class, Art Class and Bridge Club, to name a few."*

Acts Community provides fellowship and acceptance to a population that is sometimes ignored.

"I was not prepared for the impact Acts Community would have on me. My life is better than I can imagine. The work is hard sometimes, but it is incredibly fulfilling. It has changed me forever. You can't serve the Lord and step into your calling and not have it improve your life. So, for me even though it looks so different than I imagined a decade ago, it has made my life complete. I have purpose and I get to do it with my wife, and that has brought it full circle," commented Chad.

**Maybe it is possible to create a community where there is no need.**

If you would like to support the Acts Community financially or volunteer to help with lunch or activities visit the website. [www.actscommunity.org](http://www.actscommunity.org)

*"On average Acts Community feeds over 60 meals a day"*



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# Live Boldly



Having grown up in a Christian household and being a follower of Jesus Christ for as long as I can remember, boldness was not necessarily something I portrayed. I think I was always under the assumption that in order to be loving and Christ-like I should tread lightly. I tended to worry I might offend another or step on toes if I said something unpopular.

Consequently, those attitudes created in me an atmosphere of fear, concern, and worry. What if someone doesn't like me? What if I offend another with my opinions? **What if...**

We live in a time when we cannot dwell on what-ifs. We desperately need God. We need His mercy and grace to make it through a day. We need His healing hand for our sickly bodies. We need His peace as we drive down the street.

We need His presence as we walk the aisles of the grocery store. We need Him.

According to Merriam Webster dictionary, the definition of BOLDLY is "fearless before danger" or "showing or requiring a fearless daring spirit." I encourage you today to have a "fearless daring spirit" as you approach the throne of God. Be bold in letting Him know your needs. Be bold as you share about His love and security, even if it may be amid grocery shopping. Be bold in your prayers to Him, expecting that you will receive His grace, mercy, and peace.

**Remember, He wants to hear from you. He wants to be part of your life and He will equip you with incredible boldness as you share with others the goodness of Christ. Go, Live BOLDLY today!**

*So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.*

Hebrews 4:16



**By Amy Crowley**

Amy Crowley, a resident of Amarillo, Texas, is the author of Live BOLDLY. Weekday posts can be found on the Facebook group "Live BOLDLY." Send questions or prayer requests to: [liveboldly2023@outlook.com](mailto:liveboldly2023@outlook.com)

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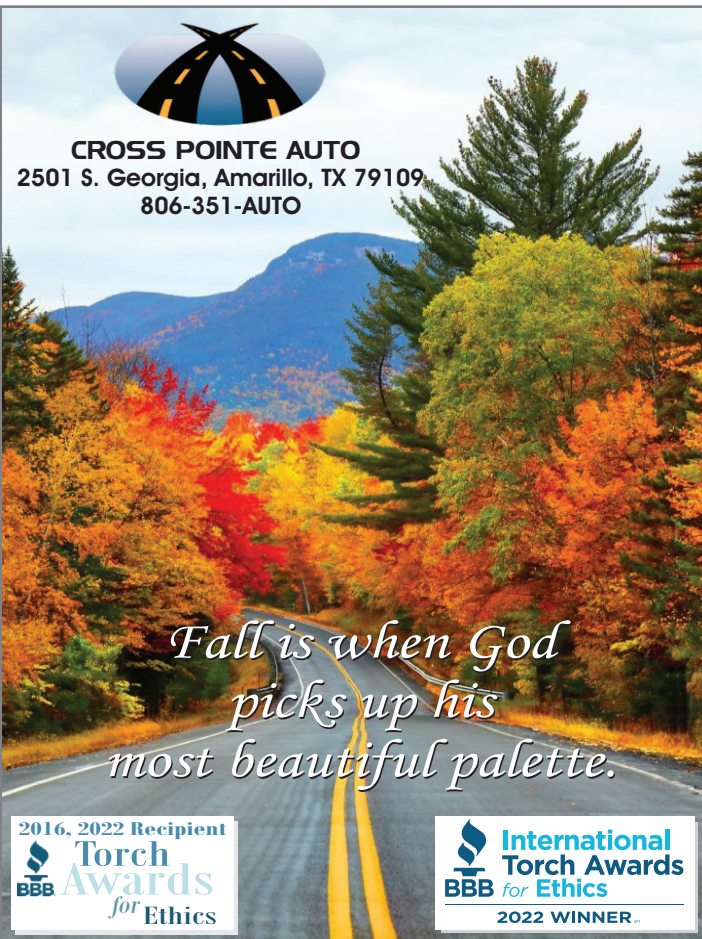



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# Curveballs

A Poem by Tammi Scoggin

You step up to the familiar plate, assuming  
to know what pitch you will meet.  
Remembering what was thrown before,  
you grip the bat as you plant your feet.

Eyes fixed on the fastball you expect, your  
swing flings forth at what you see.  
With no pounding collision of bat to ball,  
the miss knocks you down to a knee.

Heart pounds with heavy disappointment,  
as the truth is seen for all to observe.  
A strikeout caught you unprepared, for the  
pitcher chose to throw you a curve.

Likewise, it often happens in life, that when  
you put a particular plan in place,  
An unanticipated curveball comes your  
way, and you wonder what you'll face.

Yet, if you have new life in Christ, hope  
keeps you steady when sufferings arise.  
For God has said He has formed your days,  
so nothing can take Him by surprise.

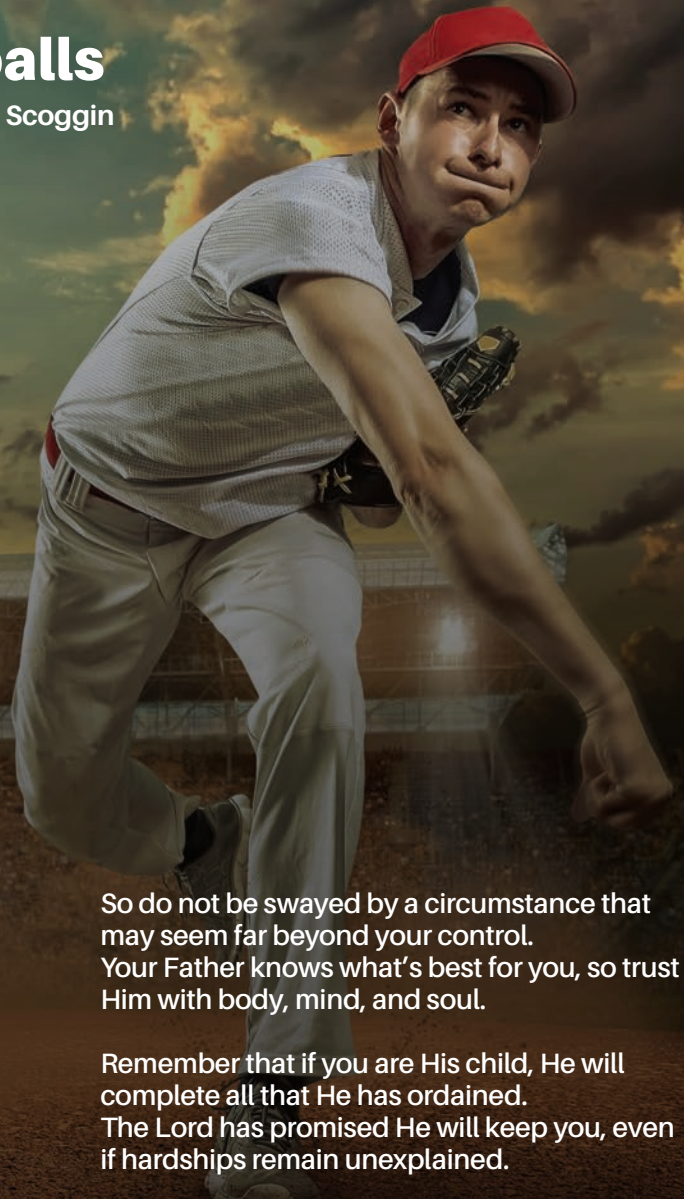
He has hands upon every pitch, and He  
carefully guides it for your eternal good.  
Many ignore His absolute power, and His  
sovereignty they have misunderstood.

Not even a sparrow falls to the ground,  
unless its Maker has done as He willed.  
He numbers every hair on your head, and  
by Him are winds and waves stilled.

So do not be swayed by a circumstance that  
may seem far beyond your control.  
Your Father knows what's best for you, so trust  
Him with body, mind, and soul.

Remember that if you are His child, He will  
complete all that He has ordained.  
The Lord has promised He will keep you, even  
if hardships remain unexplained.

When the sorrows of earthly life come to an  
end, you will reach a better land,  
For your Savior will bring you to eternal bliss  
with His own nail-scarred hand.



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## It's called Another Chance House, Not Second Chance or Last Chance, Another Chance

In downtown Amarillo there is a three-block oasis that serves men seeking another chance to get back on track in life. Another Chance House (ACH) is a full-time, live-in facility that takes in veterans and other men seeking to develop the life and living skills necessary to become active participants in society.

Our world is messy. The pain and hurt that some people experience in life is unknown to most of us. That pain and trauma manifests itself in ways that make it extremely difficult for those who have been through suffering to function well in civilian life. According to a Wall Street Journal article written by David Oshinsky (WSJ, July 21, 2023), the cycle of homelessness-hospitalization-prison is a growing crisis in American cities. Sadly, the number of successful organizations is lacking.

In the Panhandle of Texas, ACH is filling that gap. They serve between 100-125 men a year in a 56-bed facility and help them with a fresh start. They can stay up to six months if going through a Veteran's Affairs program if a bed is available, longer if working through the ACH programs and paying rent at the facility which is based on successful completion of a five-phase development program.

Mike Johnson is just one success story from Another Chance House. He was a five- to seven-time visitor at ACH. Remember, it is not a second chance house, but rather another chance indicating that there is

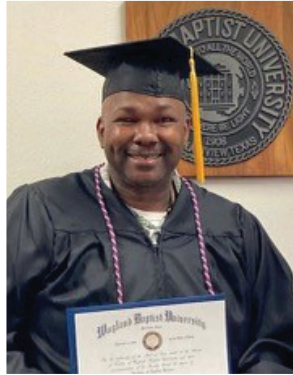


*By Dr. Aaron Hunt*

Aaron has been the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Athletic Chaplain at West Texas A&M University since 2016. Before that he was a high school Spanish teacher and coach, a junior high Asst. Principal and an Asst. Professor of Education at WT. Dr. Hunt also serves as our Pastoral Advisor.

not a limit to the amount of times a man is welcomed back into the program. Mike is a Desert Storm Army veteran who, like so many veterans, struggled to reorient himself into civilian life. He said, "I could not find my way, I could not get a hold of civilian life." He turned to drugs and alcohol and eventually his wife left him, taking with her their two daughters. He thought there was no hope for him and started roaming the streets. He went on his own cycle of homelessness and penitentiary confinement...for 23

years. After his fifth or seventh time at ACH, the rehabilitative program worked.





**anotherchancehouse.org**  
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He decided it was time to change. Mike worked the ACH program, went to school, and got a bachelor's degree in social work from Wayland Baptist University.

He moved out of ACH, bought his own home, and is now married and helping his wife with her two children. He has reconnected with his daughters and functions every day with the mission of helping others along the way. He now works full-time for the City of Amarillo as a lead team member in the Coming Home program.



*Another Chance House*



*Open House Event*



*Another Chance Program Members*

This program helps individuals experiencing homelessness by providing lifesaving supplies and building connections to local resources to help them meet their needs. He has not forgotten the help he received from ACH and works two nights a week there helping men like him find their own way.

***Our world is messy, but all of us can help by using our time, talents, and resources to make it a better place.***

***Another Chance House is one of many hidden oases in our community that can use our help serving those on the fringes.***

***We all need another chance!***

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## A Renewed Maryland House: Preserving History, Fostering Community

Nestled along Amarillo's historic Route 66, the Maryland House is being lovingly restored by local aspiring community developer, Antonio Charles. With a passion for historic architecture and revitalizing Amarillo's downtown and San Jacinto areas, Antonio hopes to breathe new life into this iconic neighborhood.

Previously a versatile space serving as an antique store, a drapery store, a clothing store, and home to several families, the Maryland House embodies Amarillo's rich past. Antonio has partnered with Casa Metta, a premier Austin-based interior design firm led by Rebecca Glass, to rejuvenate the Maryland House while preserving its 1920s Art Deco charm.

The house's elegant transformation promises a touch of East Hampton vibes, serendipitous moments that spark conversation, and vintage-inspired furniture that accents the original hardwood floors. The revamped Maryland House will serve as a vibrant hub for community events, philanthropic dinners, weddings, concerts, and more.

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# Planting Seeds

Dannie Prock was passionate about helping people, animals, and cars, especially muscle cars. She called High Plains Food Bank to ask about volunteering more than 13 years ago. Today, her gifts of time, talent, and treasure continue to bless our team, mission, and community.



By Tina Brohlin

Tina Brohlin joined the High Plains Food Bank in November 2018, the week of Thanksgiving, and just one week shy of the annual Together We Can Holiday Food and Fund Drive. As the new HPFB Communications and Marketing Director, she made her media debut at 5 a.m. on her first day. In October 2020, Tina was promoted to director of development. Throughout and emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, she's built and led a small but mighty, team that engages supporters in HPFB's mission to alleviate hunger in the Texas Panhandle.



In addition to volunteering in the office, Dannie always helped at events. She loved supporting Empty Bowls and would fuss over the children's creations. Dannie was also known to cruise around at the golf tournament after drawing door prizes to check on and thank teams and sponsors.

Dannie was more than a volunteer. She exuded kindness and patience that only a retired veteran 1st-grade teacher of 30+ years could. She was our beloved friend. We were her family.

When COVID-19 hit, Dannie started staying home. However, she'd occasionally surprise us with a drive-up hot rod visit or sweet telephone call. We all hoped Dannie would return to volunteer at some point. However, Dannie passed away in March.

"I started working at the food bank in 2010," said Laneta Six, HPFB's administrative assistant. "About six months in, I remember telling Zack I was praying for a volunteer. I was overwhelmed and needed help."

Dannie called to inquire about volunteering the following week.

"Dannie was our sole administrative volunteer for many years," said Zack Wilson, executive director of HPFB. "She found pleasure in helping us with key duties such as filing, sorting, and helping us process mail and donations."

Zack said, "One day, I was in my office when I heard the loudest and most triumphant holler. I ran into our lobby, where I saw Dannie sitting in a chair and waving her hands in the air. She looked like she had just crossed the finish line first at the Olympics. While opening the mail, she found a \$10,000.00 donation. She was so happy for us. It made both of our days. From that point forward, we joked that Dannie should always open the mail."





We soon discovered that Dannie had left the food bank in her will. Our executive team began brainstorming the best way to invest in Dannie's legacy gift. An opportunity quickly struck.

In May, Justin Young, director of nutrition education for HPFB, was t-boned while driving The Garden pickup when another driver ran a stop sign. Justin suffered a concussion, and the pickup was totaled.

"Dannie deeply loved cars and trucks," said Zack. "We know she would have loved to have purchased the garden a truck for their daily needs."

"Dannie's gift will allow our program to grow on-site and in the community," said Justin. "She was one of our biggest supporters, advocates, and kindest people I have ever met. If I could say or do anything to thank her, I would tell her to back her car up and open the trunk so we could fill it up with okra!"

Alexander Hamilton said a "legacy" is "planting seeds in a garden you never get to see." Dannie's bequest is a prime example. In her honor, the new pickup bears her name.

"She is deeply missed," said Justin. "But, I am thankful I'll be reminded of Dannie and her generosity whenever I drive The Garden pickup around."



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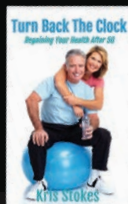
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# Wrapped in Love

By Tammi Scoggin



Tammi Scoggin, an Amarillo resident for over thirty-two years, enjoys all forms of writing. She aims to share the gospel of Jesus Christ through all of her communication and encourage others to pursue a personal relationship with Jesus, especially through Bible literacy.



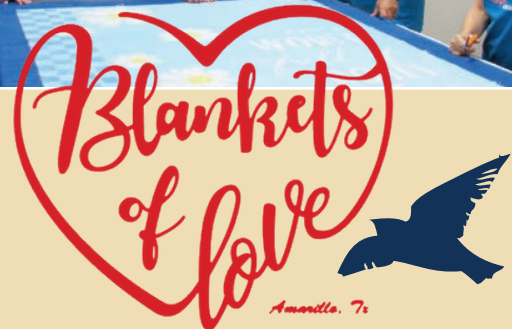
"I need something to honor and glorify you, God." A simple prayer led Thelma Martinez to spearhead a flourishing ministry that has blessed people from the Panhandle to other nations. What might have been a setback, a debilitating car wreck in 2005, became the means for God to bring something good from a difficult situation. In a wheelchair for a year and unable to drive for two, Thelma asked her husband to buy her a sewing machine and a monogram machine. During her recovery, she made blankets for baby showers.

2012-2013 proved to be another time of turmoil for Thelma and her family. First, her oldest daughter passed away during surgery in 2012, and then Martinez underwent shoulder and joint replacement that resulted in nerve damage to her right arm. During that time, at an appointment with her orthopedic doctor, who serves on medical mission teams, he showed her a video of orphans digging holes in the ground for warmth. Despite her own personal grief, Thelma felt heartbroken for their plight. Determined to help, she asked her quilting group to join her in making fleece blankets. They soon completed 150 to be sent to Africa.

After that endeavor, Martinez became aware of needs in the Panhandle. Two volunteers continued to help, and in three months, they sewed 1500 blankets. In 2016, upon joining Trinity Baptist Church, Thelma carried the ministry forward. Excited to hear Pastor Nate Magloughlin emphasize that TBC is a mission-oriented church, she introduced her ministry to her church small group. God opened doors of provision quickly. One member furnished a meeting room for sewing, and another offered the use of a trailer. Eventually, the ministry moved into rooms at TBC, for which Martinez is grateful. Around twenty-two women meet weekly, and output can average around ninety blankets. Faithful helpers



Thelma Martinez



include a 91-year-old volunteer as well as another who is visually and hearing impaired. Meeting to sew blankets has given them the opportunity for fellowship and service to others.

Several nonprofit organizations receive blankets, including The Bridge, Hope Choice, Children's Protective Services, Children's Miracle Network, Guyon Saunders Resource House, and other local shelters. In addition, the blankets are donated during natural disasters. Recently, they gave 150 to The Salvation Army for flood victims in the Hereford area. Following a hurricane in Louisiana, 190 went to the devastated region. From church members with newborn babies to veterans in hospice, the goal is to give the warmth of a blanket made by loving hands.

Story continues on page 26



Cindy Rowley has been a licensed pastor for almost 24 years and has served at Cox-Rowley Funeral Home for almost 12 years. Cindy loves visiting with and getting to know individuals and families so that she can ensure their wishes are in place. It is important to her that she be there pastorally for families when they experience the loss of a loved one. Cindy pledges that she and the capable staff at Cox-Rowley Funeral Home will care for those they are blessed to serve, will maintain the highest in moral and ethical standards, and that every funeral service will be a true "celebration of life."



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**Assurance Group**

continued from page 24

Always looking for new ideas, "capoes of hope" are special blankets sewn in such a way as to fit those with special needs, particularly in wheelchairs. The ministry has also sewn bags to provide crayons and coloring books for children in crisis, as well as facemasks and medical gowns during the COVID outbreak.

The mission statement of Blankets of Love defines its purpose - "wrapping those in need with warmth, prayer, and the love of Jesus Christ." Everyone receiving a blanket will see a patch proclaiming John 3:16. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." Thelma testifies of the importance of getting the Gospel message to those in need of Christ's hope. She recounted a veteran rubbing the John 3:16 verse on the blanket in his last moments.

Thelma gives thanks to her Lord for how the ministry has blessed others and for God's constant supply of resources for Blankets of Love. She recalls one such time when she only had 200 dollars in her account and needed to make a large fabric purchase. She prayed, trusting God to provide. At church the next morning, a lady handed her a check for 1500 dollars. Discovering a 75% off local store coupon that same day, she rejoiced in God's provision.

While Thelma began Blankets of Love using personal funds, the organization receives donations, has been blessed with a one-time grant, and holds a yearly fundraiser at Spicy Mike's to help with expenses. This year it is scheduled for October 22. Martinez can be contacted at [blanketsofloveofamarillo.org](http://blanketsofloveofamarillo.org) for questions regarding volunteering, donations, or requests from non-profit organizations for blankets.



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# Hope from Tragedy:



By Karen Benckenstein

Karen Benckenstein was a nonprofit executive and fundraiser for a decade. She is now a freelance writer in addition to being a wife and mom to 4 teenagers. Karen writes about ways to achieve wellness in mind, body, and spirit. Karen Benckenstein is currently serving as the Development Director at Sister-Bear Foundation.

On March 10, 2018, Kathryn Granger and Sarah Tucker went prom dress shopping. On the way back, they were in a car accident. Sarah did not survive the crash; Kathryn was careflighted to Northwest Texas Hospital with major injuries and burns. She was later careflighted to John Peter Smith (JPS) Hospital in Fort Worth. The other driver sustained injuries but has recovered; she is now an active volunteer for Sister-Bear. Kathryn was left paralyzed from the chest down. She was able to receive inpatient rehab in Dallas following her hospitalization. Upon returning home, the family realized the sparsity of local resources and made weekly trips to the Neurological Recovery Center (NRC) in Fort Worth. The treatments Kathryn received greatly improved her long-term health and quality of life, but the travel became unsustainable after 7 months. Kathryn's mother, Julie, looked for an option closer to home. Trustpoint in Lubbock had acquired robotic equipment similar to NRC. Kathryn was then able to drive to therapy (she has a vehicle with hand controls) for several months until insurance stopped paying.

Amarillo did not have any outpatient therapy for injuries like Kathryn sustained. Julie worked with non-profit consultant, Amy Juba, to create a new organization so that patients won't be forced to travel such long distances to access equipment and technology that can allow many to walk again and even more to live better lives. Sister-Bear Foundation's mission is to provide access to adaptive fitness and wellness resources for mobility-impaired adults recovering from

neurological accident or illness to improve their health, functionality, independence and quality of life.



In the early years, the organization began holding a sporting clay shoot fundraiser at River Breaks Ranch. Volunteers and friends of the Grangers were eager to help such a worthy cause. The organization holds the shooting event annually, has added a grants program, has created a wellness program with NWTMS, advocates for better handicap parking, and is exploring future opportunities.

Sister-Bear's Grant Program provides financial assistance for eligible expenses that are not covered by insurance. The group has given over \$48,000 in grants from inception of the program in 2021 through June of 2023. A sampling of these grants include:

- a SaeboFlex hand splint that is used to help the grant recipient grasp objects with his arm and hand, which have suffered hemiplegia (loss of movement and control) following a cerebral vascular accident (CVA) in April 2022
- a seat elevator adapter for an electric wheelchair. The grant recipient, who was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 1998, struggles with progressive weakness in his legs and upper body. The equipment allows him to maintain his current living situation by aiding him in tasks such as reaching upper cabinets.
- a wheelchair seat elevator, tray, and swing-away joystick for an individual with Cerebral Palsy who has not been able to walk since birth and depends on a wheelchair to move around. During The Panhandle Gives 2021 (a fundraising campaign during the last week of November and



hosted by the Amarillo Area Foundation), Sister-Bear Foundation was able to raise enough funds to purchase a Lokomat machine. This piece of equipment allows an individual who no longer has adequate use of their lower limbs to walk upright on a treadmill. This exercise aids in organ function, overall well-being, mental health, and more. After obtaining the equipment, the organization partnered with NWTHS Therapy Center to offer a wellness program to qualifying mobility-impaired individuals for only \$50 per visit. They offer scholarships to anyone for whom this fee presents a hardship.

Julie spends her Mondays patrolling local parking lots to check handicap spots and cars without legal handicap tags. She encourages interested individuals to volunteer with the City of Amarillo's parking enforcement program. Sister-Bear Foundation also runs public service announcements on local news channels to increase awareness of the needs of disabled individuals with neurological impairments.

This year, the organization is focusing on the future of Sister-Bear Foundation. The organization is looking for new ways to provide both fitness and wellness opportunities for the individuals who need it most.



stakeholders to create a wellness facility for the neurologically impaired.

This fall, Sister-Bear Foundation will hold their 5th annual Sister-Bear Shoot. This clay sporting competition and after-party raises funds for grants as well as adaptive fitness and wellness opportunities. This organization (named for the close relationship between Kathryn and Sarah and a childhood nickname) is making strides to create better quality of life, more independence, and hope for those who have a neurological condition or suffered a neurological injury. **Their slogan is "Hope is the anchor of the soul." It is from Hebrews 6:19 - "We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain."**

If you want to help the Sister-Bear Foundation in creating more hope, go to their website at [www.sister-bear.com](http://www.sister-bear.com). If you need assistance and have suffered from a neurological injury or disease, the grant application can also be found on the website.

For more information about the NWTHS Lokomat Wellness Program, please contact Jennifer Buendia at 806-351-7045. Before September 23, go to <https://sbshoot23.givesmart.com/> to buy a ticket or register to shoot at the 5th Annual Sister-Bear Shoot.



They plan to partner with local gyms and fitness providers to create more inclusive environments with adaptive equipment and improved cultures. They are also pursuing avenues to work with local medical providers and other

# The Seed of Leadership



By Sharon Miner

What comes to your mind when you read or hear the word leadership? Is it something you fear? Leadership is a quality we all possess and should embrace because it is a characteristic of Jesus Christ. The ability and capacity to lead is an act of surrender to the Lord to do what He tells us to do. Rene' Cano didn't wake up one day and decide he wanted to be a leader. He just simply made the decision to follow Jesus, and all throughout his life God placed people and circumstances in his life to nurture and grow the seed of leadership.

Rene' is an infectious leader with a pure heart and a love for God and people. During the day he is the assistant director of instructional leadership at Region 16 and is a leadership coach and speaker for various corporations and organizations. But when you talk to Rene', you soon find that leadership is engrained in every aspect of his life. It's not something he puts on when he gets up in the morning, it is just who he is. His ability to inspire and motivate others is his superpower.

**"Leadership is recognizing the people around you and building them up."**

"Everybody has skills and everybody has tools, but they don't always see it in themselves. Good leaders recognize that there are extraordinary people around them, and they pull out those God-given talents. That is what Jesus did with the disciples," said Rene' in a humble voice. "A leader sees potential, and you must look behind the hard surface and build trust. People can hear you speak words, but they want to see it in action and that takes time."

Like many people, Rene' experienced a season of believing God was disappointed with him and his struggle was learning to forgive himself.

"For a while I felt like God wasn't happy with me and maybe I wasn't living up to my fullest potential. Some of my shortcomings in life I wasn't proud of, but God reset in me 'as far as the east is to the west are your sins and I have equipped you and given you the tools. Are you going to lead and step up to the challenge?' As I began to dig into that question, I understood that I am not anchored in the past. You cannot let your past dictate who you are but let Jesus dictate who you are. My wife and spiritual mentors kept reminding me that Jesus loves me and that was a turning point in my life," as he commented with a peaceful smile.

Rene' believes that the confidence to lead comes from the Lord.

**"If you read your Bible, be still and listen to what God has to say, He will equip you."**

"Sometimes out of fear we run away or out of over confidence we run too fast. Jesus calls us to just be still. I have found that when I am still, He fills me with His Holy Spirit and puts people in my path to direct me to do His will and He has never failed me."



Rene' Cano, right, with his family.

When we believe in Jesus Christ the seed of leadership is planted by the Holy Spirit. Whether we are leading our family, friends, a corporation or a stranger, the Holy Spirit will cultivate and grow our potential to bring out kingdom giftings in others. Rene' put it best, "John 3:30 says increase Jesus and I must decrease. If we continue to increase in Jesus and dig in, he will show you the way. No matter what the world says or what we see, if we put our hope and faith in Him, we will always be a conqueror."

Leadership is not something we should fear. There is nothing scary about Rene'. In fact, the sweet humility he exhibits entices you to follow him as he follows Jesus. His leadership is courageous, steady and strong, and all who encounter him feel the presence of God. I don't think the Lord is disappointed.

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