

Irving Cares Rated In Top 1%

Irving Cares is honored to get a prestigious Top-Rated Award by GreatNonprofits, the leading provider of user reviews about nonprofit organizations. Less than 1% of eligible nonprofits won a place on the 2012 Top-Rated List.

"We are excited to be named a Top-Rated 2012 Nonprofit," says Teddie Story, CEO.

The Top-Rated Nonprofit award was based on the large number of positive reviews that Irving Cares received from donors, volunteers and clients. One person wrote, 'If you're looking for a non-profit organization that has great leadership, transparency, uses financial and other resources very efficiently, and holds itself accountable by reporting key metrics, then Irving Cares is it!'



TOP-RATED

NONPROFIT 2012

"We are gratified by Irving Cares for its work," said Perla Ni, CEO of GreatNonprofits, "They deserve to be discovered by more donors and volunteers who are looking for a great nonprofit to support."

The reviews show the on-the-ground results of this nonprofit. This award is a form of recognition by the community.

GreatNonprofits is the leading site for donors and volunteers to find reviews and ratings of nonprofits. Its mission is to inspire and inform donors and volunteers, enable nonprofits to show their impact, and promote greater feedback and transparency. www.greatnonprofits.org.

Tammi Jo Gets A Job



Tammi Jo had recently been laid off, but thankfully had heard about Irving Cares and attended a Job Search Seminar this past July.

She met with the case manager after the seminar, received a referral to Attitudes and Attire for interview clothing, and came by to get weekly job listings from the case manager.

The case manager called monthly to check on her employment progress and to offer additional services if she needed them. Tammi Jo was hired in October by a local dentist, Dr. Joshi!

Tammi Jo's job has gone from part-time to full-time and has just completed the mandatory 90-day probationary period – congratulations Tammi Jo!

SUCCESS STORIES

Inside

- 2 A Letter To Our Community From CEO Teddie Story
- 3 Corporate Giving Magnifies Impact
- 3 Letters To the Editor
- 4 Scouting For Food
- 4 Join the Fight Against Hunger
- 4 Feinstein Matching Grant
- 4 Earn It! Keep It! Save it!
- 5 Long-Time Volunteer Retires

- 5 What Your Cash Gift Can Do
- 6 A Happy Holiday At Irving Cares
- 6 Jingle If You Care
- 7 Angel Gives Back: A Former Client Becomes A Donor
- 7 Ms. Jones Gets Help With Irving Cares Utilities Assistance
- 7 Irving Cares Participates In UTA Internship Program
- 8 Irving CAN

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Teddie Story
Chief Executive Officer

A Letter To Our Community

Dear Friends,

As many of you know, a horrible tragedy occurred at Irving Cares on Friday, December 28, when a client was fatally stabbed by her husband in our offices. The entire Irving Cares board, staff and volunteers are united in their sorrow over this senseless loss of life, and our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of the victim.

Irving Cares has a 55-year history of safely and effectively providing a hand up to people in need in our community, and we will continue to carry out that mission through our critical programs and community outreach.

In response to this incident, the following steps have been taken:

- We immediately arranged for on-site group and individual counseling for our staff and volunteers; we will continue to provide access to mental health professionals by phone or in person as long as they are needed by our staff and volunteers for emotional comfort and support
- We are working with the City of Irving, which owns our building, to ensure the continued safety and security of our facility

It is difficult to anticipate when such an isolated incidence of domestic violence will happen in a public place, and as this is the first incident in more than five decades, we are confident that our facility will remain a safe haven for our community.

I would like to acknowledge the incredibly strong, resilient and dedicated group of staff and volunteers who are so committed to this organization and provide hope and healing to thousands of families each year. I also want to thank our board members and the community at large, who have been very supportive during the last few weeks.

It is an honor and a privilege to serve the Irving community, and we look forward to continuing our important work with your support. Should you have any questions, I invite you to call me at any time at (972) 721-9181 x 203.

Sincerely,



Corporate Giving Magnifies Impact

Did you know that online giving can be set up as a recurring gift opportunity? Some donors have chosen to make gifts to Irving Cares on a monthly basis. It's simple to do at www.irvingcares.org and it adds up to making a huge difference for the neediest residents in our community.

Check with your HR department to find out if your company has a gift matching or volunteer time matching program. Retirees too, will find that many companies match community service with community grants. These funds are invested back into the Irving community. Generally, forty hours of service is the threshold for a volunteer incentive program grant, and some companies will allow spouses to participate in their program.

Another option to ensure that Irving Cares is able to continue meeting needs is to include the agency in your will or estate planning. If you would like to learn more or to discuss other ways to leave a legacy, please contact Teddie Story at tstory@irvingcares.org, or Kimberly Humphries at khumphries@irvingcares.org, or call 972-721-9181.



Representatives from various corporate partners shown making donations. Companies represented are Kimberly Clark (left), Toyota of Irving (top), Frito Lay (above), and Express Scripts (left).



Letters to the Editor

Recently, we surveyed our supporters to better learn their newsletter preferences and learned that many of you read the newsletter cover-to-cover. We collected email addresses for those preferring a newsletter by email. We want and appreciate your feedback. Keep in touch with Irving Cares:

on Facebook at facebook.com/IrvingCares
by email at icares@irvingcares.org
by phone (972) 721-9181
by U.S. Mail at P.O. Box 177425, Irving TX 75017-7425.
You are encouraged to communicate with us!

Scouting for Food



Be on the lookout for yellow bags that will be on your front porch soon; Scouting for Food is here. Scouting for Food is one of the largest single-day, door-to-door food collection events in Irving and one of the largest in the nation. Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and

Venture Crews in Irving pass out yellow bags in the community on February 9, and then collect non-perishable donations on February 16. Non-perishable items can include canned vegetables, soups, meats, pastas, boxed skillet meals, peanut butter,

jelly, etc.

Much of the food collected in Irving is distributed to Irving Cares. Let's help the Scouts help Irving Cares by filling your bags for pick up, and we can make a difference in the lives of those in need.

Join the Fight Against Hunger

As you're reading this newsletter, Irving Cares is drawing nearer to our fiscal year end of March 31. This year has been brutal in terms of requests for services through the Food Pantry. **We have provided groceries for 1,768 more families than last year.**

More and more families need help with food because of job loss, reduced hours at work, or myriad unexpected expenses. When families

live from paycheck to paycheck, any extra expense causes financial trouble right away.

We need to raise at least \$80,000 through our Annual Appeal in order to continue our fight against hunger in Irving, Texas. You can join our powerful allies in this fight: the \$25,000 challenge grant from Belmont Foundation and the Feinstein Foundation's proportionate

match.

We will use these donations to purchase food items not donated, providing nutritionally-balanced meals for hungry Irving families, and your gift will be matched. Visit www.irvingcares.org to make a secure donation today.

Please help us in our fight against hunger with a gift to the Annual Appeal.

Feinstein Matching Grant

Irving Cares currently feeds an average 856 families a month with 85 pounds of emergency groceries per order. We can't do it without you. Start watching the mail for your lunch sack and join the most successful grassroots campaign to fight hunger in our country!

Between March 1 and April 30, Irving Cares will report

every dollar (and pound of food) collected from the use of this challenge to the Feinstein Foundation. Their annual \$1 million giveaway distributes proportionately matching funds among 'feeding community' nonprofits throughout the country. Plus, thanks to the Belmont Foundation, every dollar donated between March 1 and March 31 will be doubled; up to \$25,000.

Irving Cares participates in this United Way program that offers **free tax preparation** services to qualifying people who make less than \$50,270, all in an effort to avoid "Instant Refund" loans and associated fees and interest. Last year's program at Irving Cares helped 313 families get refunds totaling \$402,390 or an average of \$1,285 per family! Appointments are required and can be made by calling (214) 978-0081 for the following dates and times:

Tuesday, January 22	2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday, January 29	9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Saturday, February 2	9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Tuesday, February 5	2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Friday, April 5	2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Earn It! Keep It! Save It!
UNITED WAY OF METROPOLITAN DALLAS

Long-Time Volunteer Retires

by Kyle Taylor, Coordinator of Volunteers

Irving Cares lost a very valuable asset when David Pekrul decided to turn in his van keys. David has been a dedicated driver for Irving Cares since May 2004. For the last eight and half years David has gotten up in the early Tuesday morning hours, driven the three different vehicles to North Texas Food Bank to pick up our food order for Irving Cares (outlasting both the Dodge and Chevy vans).

David has driven for Irving Cares in the City of Irving Christmas Parade and the Fourth of July Parade for many years; picking up the van, decorating it, and giving up his day to represent Irving Cares in these events. David has also been on pick-up-call for everything from the collections of food drives to different publications for events and classes.



David Pekrul turns in his keys to Irving Cares vehicles.

David has been a great ambassador for Irving Cares, so much that when we would arrive to pick up an order, we would not have to wait as someone would call out, "Get the Irving Cares order!" enabling us to get in and out much faster.

David was a great asset, friend and teacher for Irving Cares, and I know that he is missed. I am reminded as to the type of person that David is, because I am asked by at least one person every Tuesday morning, "How is David doing?" He may have retired his keys, but he is certainly not forgotten.

Thanks for the years of early mornings, holiday Saturdays, and for saying OK, when the phone rang and we asked, "David, do you mind going to get..."

What Your Cash Gift Can Do In Employment Services

\$25 =
8 bus passes



\$50 =
clothing voucher /
shoes, pants, shirt



\$100 =
gas voucher /
1 week / 5 clients



\$250 =
home health
aide training



A Happy Holiday At Irving Cares

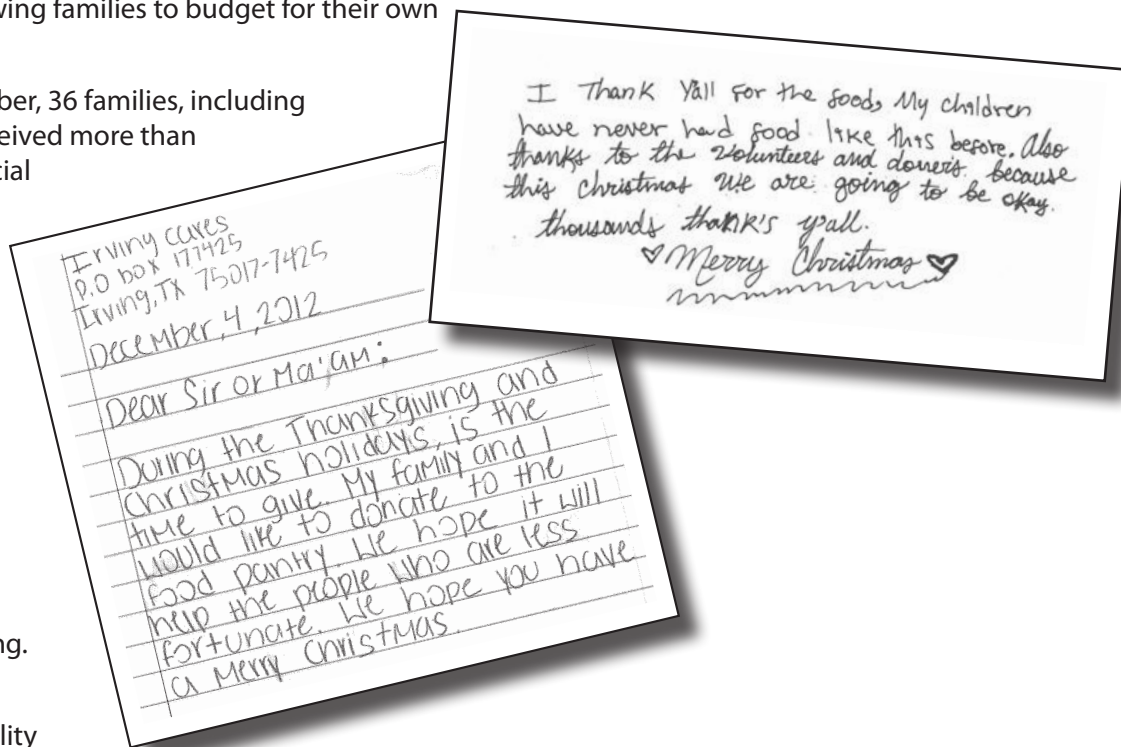
The Holiday Assistance Program helps qualifying families by paying a large portion of their rent, mortgage or utilities in December. The program provides "...assistance and training to promote self-sufficiency," allowing families to budget for their own holiday giving.

This past December, 36 families, including 104 children, received more than \$12,000 in financial assistance with rent or utilities and a generous grocery gift card.

All the families also completed a money management class to provide skills for future holiday budgeting.

Volunteers are crucial to our ability

to deliver this service. THANK YOU to the volunteers who served as case workers for holiday assistance, and to Consumer Credit Counseling of Dallas who conducted the money management class.



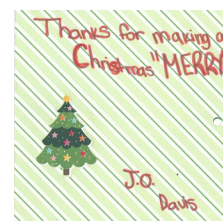
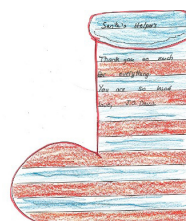
Jingle If You Care

Envision a long line of elementary school kids walking through the school halls or around the playground, listening to holiday tunes, ringing jingle bells as they walk. Sounds like fun, but what does this have to do with Irving Cares?

We have a strong community partner in Stipes Elementary Principal Jackie Gorena. They've held food drives throughout the years, and in 2011, they held Jingle if you Care where students and faculty donated \$1 per jingle bell, resulting in almost \$400 in cash and 500 pounds of groceries. Her goal for 2012 was to expand Jingle if you Care to more campuses.

Those participating this year were **Brandenburg, Elliott, Gilbert, Hanes, Thomas Haley, Keyes, Kinkeade, Lee, Lively, Schulze and Stipes**. There was tremendous support as 11 campuses donated \$6,041.83 to the Food Pantry at Irving Cares. Lively Elementary raised the most money.

We can purchase 21,577 pounds of food – enough to feed 254 families for a week. That's as many families as we see during seven business days. What a fantastic way to help children learn about helping others through philanthropy and community service.



Angel Gives Back

In 1998 Angel and her spouse fell on hard times. Angel was having a difficult time holding down a job due to her bipolar disorder, and the couple came to Irving Cares for help with food while their food stamps were being processed.

Shortly thereafter, Angel's husband got a raise and then she was able to get and maintain a job, but that was only temporary until she fell ill again and the marriage ended.

Flash forward to 2012: Angel is once again back on her feet and decided to "give back" to Irving Cares when she and her mother made a very generous gift. Thank you Angel!



Ms. Jones Gets Help

Ms. Jones, a single mom and school teacher, was on maternity leave for three months. As her leave came to an end and she started back to work, she received only a partial pay check.

Ms. Jones was not able to juggle her December TXU Energy electric bill, rent, and daycare for

her new baby, so she came to Irving Cares for assistance through TXU Energy Aid. She had never had to ask for help and hopes to one day repay Irving Cares. Ms. Jones said she will always remember Irving Cares for helping her with her bill.

Irving Cares Participates In UTA Internship Program

With the hiring of Beverly Wilborn, MSSW in July 2011, Irving Cares was again eligible to participate in the Internship Program at University of Texas at Arlington.



My name is Lilian Esenwah, and I am a social work student from the University of Texas at Arlington. I decided to do my internship at Irving Cares because I wanted to be able to get a macro level of understanding the need of helping people during their hard times and also in many other areas.

During hard times of my own as a mother, I know what it feels like not being able to provide for your family -- at least giving them the normal three square meals due to loss of job, injury or death.

Listening to clients talk about their predicaments and giving them an answer that would help their present

situation is my joy, and Irving Cares gives me the opportunity to do so. I have seen how people's lives have changed through the help of this program. My life has changed too, because with the help of this program, my husband who has been out of job for months finally got a job that he loves.

Words can't express my feelings, but to wrap everything into a nut shell, my life has been impacted with the kindness from everyone from my first day. I haven't seen a place where there is so much dedication, love, kindness and teamwork. Thanks again, Irving Cares, for giving me this huge opportunity to have this life-changing experience.

In this program, social work interns are assigned to agencies where they gain field experience, and the agency also gets an opportunity to see the most recent trends in the industry of social work. This past summer, Lilian joined the case management team for the Emergency Assistance Program at Irving Cares. Here's her story:

Irving CAN

Did you know there is a monthly meeting of various charities, churches, civic groups, schools, healthcare providers, governmental entities and individuals focused on helping residents in need? You may have heard of the Poverty & Homeless Coalition or the Irving Human Services Council. These groups combined to form the Irving Community Action Network (Irving CAN) which meets on the fourth Monday at Family Advocacy Center for a networking and informational lunch. The group's goal is bringing resources and the people who need them together.

Would your church like to be more involved in the community? How can you find out which charity can help your neighbor pay his electricity bill? Does your church provide an outreach program that needs some



participants? Are you a member of a civic group that is searching for a place to volunteer?

All this and more is the body of work for Irving CAN. Visit www.irvingpovertyandhomeless.org or find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/IrvingCommunityActionNetwork to learn more. Or better yet, attend a meeting and see us at work in person. By joining together, we can serve more people more effectively.

Contact Teddie Story at 972-721-9181 x 203 or tstory@irvingcares.org for more information.



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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