

SAMMONS ENTERPRISES OFFERS \$100,000 CHALLENGE GRANT

Sammons Enterprises is celebrating its 75th year in 2013. Founder Charles Sammons was a quiet but generous entrepreneur. He loved pooling his donations with others to make a bigger impact, and this Challenge Grant will do just that.



Irving Cares donors have stepped up, already giving \$67,000 toward the Grant. Watch your mail for how to participate, or send your donation in the enclosed envelope **before December 15** to meet the Grant's deadline.

This couldn't have come at a better time—summer is traditionally our slowest season for donations, yet there are more requests for services through our Food Pantry and utility assistance programs.

Thank you to Sammons Enterprises for supporting Irving Cares in such a generous way. It is through the dedicated work of everyone that we are able to serve the families who need us. ♥

Young Beauty Queen with Huge Heart Makes Donation to Irving Cares Food Pantry

KayLeigh is wonderful little girl with a heart for serving others who loves to dance competitively. After finishing dance nationals this past summer, KayLeigh asked her mother if she could enter a beauty pageant to have something to do on weekends. After an immediate reaction of "absolutely not," KayLeigh's mom did some research and discovered Miss Heart of the USA pageants, which believe in helping others before beauty. KayLeigh decided to help feed hungry families in her community.

KayLeigh entered her first pageant in July and won! As Queen of Hearts, KayLeigh organized a food drive, collecting 1,148 pounds of groceries. The drive was so successful it had to be delivered in two separate trips!

Irving Cares is very grateful for this generous donation — it's enough to feed 3 families of 4 for four weeks.

We hope to see KayLeigh again soon between her dancing, swimming, softball, painting, Sunday school and sleepovers with friends!

To coordinate a food drive, contact Kyle Taylor at (972) 721-9181 x 209, or email ktaylor@irvingcares.org. ♥



KayLeigh with the results of her food drive

Keep up with Irving Cares online!

Download a QR scanning app and scan on your mobile device.



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www.irvingcares.org



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Irving Cares, a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation, publishes Focus to update the community about our programs, activities and plans. Please contact us if you have a story or information of interest.

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Celanese Helps in Early Stages of Remodel

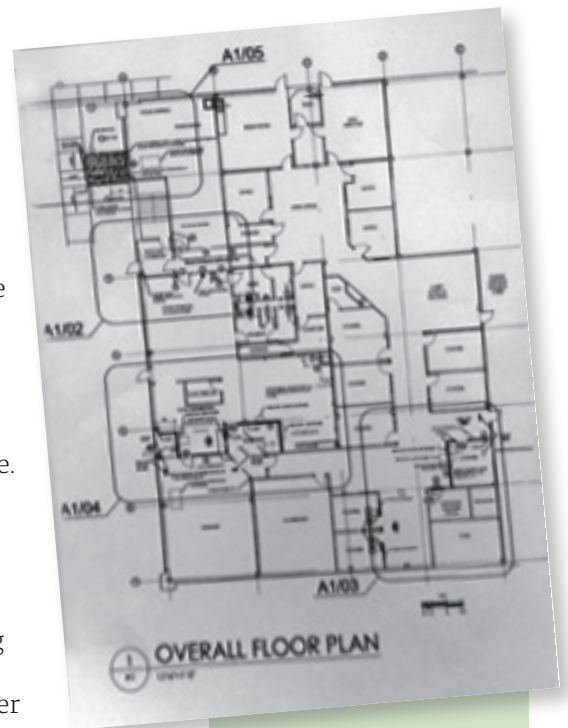
Celanese employees provided much needed assistance helping Irving Cares prepare for a large scale food pantry remodeling project. They spent three days taking down shelving, moving tables and fixtures, making new sorting signs, reorganizing canned goods, and

filling client food pantry orders.

"We could not have gotten the warehouse ready to store construction materials and continued to serve our clients without the help of the good folks from Celanese," states Kyle Taylor, Coordinator of Volunteers. Each shift challenged the other to be the best shift that served!

While working in the food pantry, the Celanese volunteers heard the Irving Cares story and got a first hand look at what hunger looks like.

Celanese volunteers were impressed with the work of Irving Cares; they are committed to coming back in June with an out-of-school Summer Food Drive and a summer Days of Service project. We look forward to continuing this great new partnership with Celanese. ♥



Renovations Are Under Way!

Sheetrock dust is flying at Irving Cares. Work started October 29 to add a new case management office, improve the lines of sight to two case management offices, create a larger client waiting area, and vastly improve our ability to receive food donations.

Last year, over 44,000 people were served by Irving Cares: 1 in 5 people in our community. This renovation will help us serve our clients quickly and efficiently.

The renovation will be complete around November 15, so stop by — we'd love to show you how they turn out. ♥

Bank of America Foundation Donation

Bank of America Foundation recently delivered a \$20,000 Critical Needs grant to help with food pantry expenses.

Irving Cares continues to see increases in people seeking help to meet their basic needs, especially with food assistance. Monthly visits nearly doubled from 426 to 802 visits requesting nutritionally balanced food orders, since 2009; averaging 20% increases annually.

During this same time the value of the dollar decreased and the costs to purchase food and rent went up; while worker hours were cut to help with corporate cost-saving measures.

Results from our most recent food pantry survey indicate in the past twelve months: 100% of respondents had been worried about having enough food for the family and 75% said they had been hungry, but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food.

This is an important contribution toward improving the quality of life for Irving residents in need, and Bank of America is a great partner for impact. ♥



DONATION

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Vicki Fox

A native Dallasite and long-time resident of Irving, Vicki Fox has been volunteering at Irving Cares since 2009. Vicki works with Sally Hendricks in Intake, initially greeting clients and helping them check in or creating a folder with all the pertinent data required to meet with a case manager.

Vicki has been married to Jim since January, 2012. She first heard about Irving Cares at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, and decided to start

volunteering because she felt it "necessary to give back to the community, and I enjoy helping people get back on their feet." Her years as owner of a logistics company gives her the experience and organizational skills needed for Intake.

Besides her volunteer hours at Irving Cares, Vicki also volunteers at Meals on Wheels and Austin Street Shelter. When not volunteering, Vicki enjoys tennis, Zumba, cooking and spending time with their grandkids.

"I enjoy the Irving Cares staff, volunteers and camaraderie they display" says Fox. Vicki is a favorite at Irving Cares with her witty sense of humor and quick one-liners! ♥



Vicki Fox

Clients Tell Us What They Think About the Food Pantry

Irving Cares distributes a Food Security Survey to every food pantry client the first week of each month.

Did you know 86% of those surveyed said they ate less than they should because there wasn't enough money for food?

Some other comments from the survey:

"After I paid bills, there was nothing left for food. Having to ask for help made me feel bad, but the staff didn't make me feel like I was a failure. Thank you!"

"We had to pick between food and bills. We only have one income at this point. I didn't realize how hard it would be with just one of us working. Our experience at Irving Cares was great."

"I had medical issues – cancer. So I couldn't work. Everyone at Irving Cares has been wonderful." ♥

REAL STORIES

Sylvia

Sylvia had worked as a tax claim specialist with the same company for 18 years, but when her employer started to cut employee hours, she found herself in need of food and rental assistance. She met with a case manager at Irving Cares who shared information about Job Search Seminar.

After attending a seminar, Sylvia took the information she had learned back to her co-workers, many of whom were facing 60-day layoff notifications. Most of those facing unemployment were also over 50 years old, had been employed for many years, and had no idea how to start a job search. Sylvia shared much of what she had learned at Irving Cares about interviewing, resumé writing, and budgeting in the mandatory money management class in order to receive the rental assistance.

Lastly, she thanked the case manager for taking the time to help her, and let her know that her blessings had carried a long way. ♥

9.20.13
Mr. Taylor,
Thank you so much for
the generous donation of food
you shared for a family in
need on Friday afternoon.
A single Dad - unemployed but
trying to complete nursing
school & 2 boys (one of whom
is deaf) were very grateful!
We appreciate Irving Cares -
Debbie Simmons, Counselor

REAL STORIES

Maria

This summer, Maria received a letter from Irving ISD to get free school supplies at a special community event. Irving Cares had a booth at this event, and Maria recalled receiving food from Irving Cares about four years earlier.

As we hear so often during these economic times, Maria's husband's work had been very slow, and her part-time employment provided the main source of income. She decided to come to Irving Cares again to the food pantry and while visiting with a case manager discovered Irving Cares was able to help her with two months of her electric bill after attending the mandatory money management class.

Maria was thrilled to have food for her family and two months of electric service to help them out of their

financial bind. She left with an enormous smile, thanks and hugs for the staff! ♥

A personal thank you note from a counselor to Irving Cares

Community Roots Strengthen *The Great Harvest* ~ An Evening to Care Held in October 2013

When this year's Chair announced a goal of \$250,000 with a stretch goal of \$300,000, the Steering Committee didn't blink twice and set about reaching them. The team pulled together fantastic auction items and a hearty dinner at themed dining tables for 350 of our closest friends.

The live and silent auctions were very competitive with guests bidding on travel packages, celebrity chef dining experiences, fabulous jewelry, sports memorabilia, and items for family and home. Friends bought raffle tickets for a television, played Heads or Tails to win an iPad Mini, and mingled with friends gathered around a good cause.

The surprise of the evening came when we kicked off the fundraising for a case management position in the Employment Services Program. From center stage, Irving Cares CEO Teddie Story said, "I have a fantastic announcement to make this evening that will enable us to help even more people become employed and able to take care of their families. I am so

pleased to announce that this week we received a challenge from Sammons Enterprises. They will match, dollar for dollar up to \$100,000 any money we raise for Irving Cares."

We raised \$17,005 that night with that request, and when combined with the Sammons match, enough to hire a case manager, effectively doubling our capacity in the Employment Services Program. What a success!!

Thanks to all who participated as sponsors, auction donors, guests, and the Sammons match, we reached yet another milestone revenue amount of over \$270,000. Expenses are slowly trickling in, but will come in under 20%, well below the industry standard for special events.



Cydney Roberts has agreed to return as chairperson for 2014, and Kathleen Knight and Stewart Cedar will serve as chairpersons in 2015.

Stay tuned for information about 2014's event, which we anticipate will be just as successful. ♥



Fran places an auction bid at The Great Harvest

Holiday Assistance Program

Last Christmas season, 31 families — including 104 children — received financial assistance and a generous grocery gift card.

Irving school counselors refer families to us, and Irving Cares pays a large portion of their rent or utilities in December. Instead of getting toys for their children, the family has extra funds to budget for their own holiday giving and can make their own decisions about gifts.

Families attend a money management class to learn how to better manage their income — so your support not only provides "fish," but helps teach the family "how to fish."

One family commented, "You have helped me and my three kids have a roof over our heads for the holidays. God Bless and Merry Christmas from the bottom of our hearts."

Offer the gift of hope this holiday season to a family in need. Your generous gift gives families a hand up, not a handout. ♥

*Hope is a heart that
is open to the world
around you. Hope
is knowing that things
change — and that
we can help
things to change
for the better.*

— Lauren Thompson



Give the gift of hope this holiday season!

Hogs & Hearts Rally Benefit Held

The Rally on Saturday, September 14, benefiting Irving Cares collected more than 2,800 pounds of food and medical equipment that will be used to benefit senior citizens in need. Many of these folks go without proper medical equipment and essential items due to low wages, job loss, injuries, illness, age, domestic violence, or divorce.

While everyone is susceptible to hard times, the elderly are at high risk, and make up the majority of those served by Healthcare Associates. "The staff and physicians at Healthcare Associates of Irving are grateful for the opportunity to assist the citizens of Irving in as many ways as possible," said Dr. Mark Anderson.



Hogs & Hearts raised over \$3,500 for senior citizens in need

The Rally featured children's activities, a silent auction, prize drawings, food, live music and a yummy deep fry contest. Proceeds from the activities raised \$3,596 for Irving Cares.

"We are so pleased Healthcare Associates chose Irving Cares as the beneficiary of Hogs & Hearts Rally.

It's a great match for our agency, especially the Patient Transportation Program. We provide several rides each week to this facility, and we appreciate their attitude of giving back to the community," said Teddie Story, Irving Cares CEO.

A special thank you to Healthcare Associates! ♥



HOLIDAY FUNDRAISING DRIVE

FUNDRAISER

Join us this holiday season at Irving restaurants as they donate a percentage of their sales during the week of **December 9-15** to benefit Irving Cares.

Participating restaurants receive free and discounted advertising in *Rambler* Newspapers both before and after the Pay It Forward Week.

Businesses are welcome to participate as well. Express Employment Professionals will make a donation in honor of every person they hire during Pay It Forward Week.



Last year, Irving Cares programs served over 44,000 people — 1 in 5 in our community.

Visit www.irvingcares.org for a list of participating restaurants. For information about becoming a participating restaurant, contact Teddie Story at 972-721-9181 x 203 or tstory@irvingcares.org. ♥



Last year, Irving Cares programs served over 44,000 people: about 20% of our community.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Sally Hendricks

INTAKE RECEPTIONIST

Here is a story of selfless giving and service — in Sally's own words:

Actually, I started as a volunteer at Irving Cares in September, 1995 doing administrative work for Joyce Brown, former Executive Director. A good friend in our church had suggested I volunteer while I was recovering from breast cancer and chemotherapy.

Soon after, a part-time position as Intake Receptionist was available, and I was hired on October 16, 1995. This position became full time within a few years as the agency grew from a staff of 5 to the current 12 staff members.

In 1995 we were serving fewer than 3,000 clients per year compared to the more than 40,000 clients we served last year.



I have always been involved in volunteer work beginning at Baylor

University Medical Center in Dallas, Irving Community Theater (ICT Main Stage), Irving Symphony League, Irving Heritage Society, as well as Irving High School PTA.

My husband, Dr. Bill Hendricks, and I came to Irving 50 years ago to establish his general surgery practice. We have 2 children, Andy Hendricks and Mary Evelyn Wallace, and 6 grandchildren.

With the many programs we have to offer Irving residents, we are truly "a hand up, not a handout" agency, and it is very gratifying for me to be part of this work. ♥

Recommend a deserving Irving Cares staffer for a spotlight in our newsletter!

Email the individual's name and the reason(s) you think they should be recognized to Karlene Swaynie at kswaynie@irvingcares.org today!

50+39= 3,495!

It Is Nifty Turning Fifty

By Irving Cares CEO, Teddie Story

In the last newsletter, I shared my life's story and asked friends to forego any gifts and make a donation to Irving Cares to celebrate my milestone birthday.

I was so proud to see the donations rolling in! 39 gifts resulted in \$3,495 in donations to Irving Cares, and I could not be more pleased. Thank you for caring enough about me to donate.

Honorariums and memorials are a very meaningful way to show you care about people in your lives. Think about making a memorial or honorarium gift this holiday season. It really does make a great impact. ♥



REAL STORIES

Krislyn

Krislyn, 37, has a Masters degree in business but had been laid off and was working as a home health aide. Her earnings were low and she couldn't pay rent. She came to Irving Cares for help, and also met the Employment Services Manager. She decided to try teaching and Irving Cares helped her by paying for her State Teacher's Certification. With her certification, she was hired in the enrollment department at a beauty school, earning more than \$50,000. Six months after her first visit to Irving Cares, Krislyn has regained her self-sufficiency. ♥

REAL STORIES

Maria

Maria came to Irving Cares initially at age seventeen and received assistance getting her GED. She had a baby and then dropped out of high school. Once she had earned her GED, she found a technical school in Arlington which she attended while working at a jewelry store earning \$7.00 an hour. Working and going to school while raising a child alone was challenging for Maria. She kept in touch with the Employment Services Manager, Mary Shelton, and recently called to say that she had completed technical school and has been hired as a receptionist at an Irving dental office, and is earning a much higher salary. ♥

Tom Thumb's Good Neighbor Program

Thank you to all who collected Tom Thumb's Community Bucks Holiday Program certificates. With your support, Irving Cares has collected over three times as many as we collected last year!

While Tom Thumb issued these certificates during the month of September, **we are still able to submit them for cash.** If you find any tucked away in a drawer, please send them to:

Irving Cares
Attn: Karlene
440 S. Nursery Road, Ste 101
Irving, TX 75060



**Write a review
of Irving Cares!**

Irving Cares Top-Rated by Great Nonprofits Website

For the second year in a row, Irving Cares has been named a "Top-Rated Nonprofit" by the website GreatNonprofits.

org. Thanks to all the clients, volunteers and donors who wrote about their experience with Irving Cares.

Take a minute to see what our supporters are saying — go to <http://www.greatnonprofits.org> to read their reviews, or to write one of your own. ♥



The help of extraordinary volunteers makes Irving Cares possible. Last year, volunteers logged 16,236 hours!

To help us out, contact Kyle Taylor, Volunteer Coordinator, at 972-721-9181 ext 209, or at ktaylor@irvingcares.org. Include your contact info, dates and times you're available, and the kind of work you'd like to do.



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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