

Canyon Lake Community Profile



BRIDGET McDOUGALL

...choosing to give back

First she wanted to be a nurse; then a teacher. Along the way, she became a mom, a mother of three children, now grown and living in the Houston area. This background of caring laid the groundwork for how she chooses to spend a lot of her free time – helping less fortunate girls get a taste of home at Christmas and year ‘round.

Bridget McDougall was raised with five brothers and sisters. Her dad died when she was 16, leaving her mom to raise them alone. It wasn’t easy, but they excelled. Following high school, Bridget was given a four-year scholarship to pursue her academics. It is a favor she has not forgotten and wanted to repay. Many of us have a desire to repay favors we’ve received along the way, but Bridget did more than desire. She saw an opportunity and then acted.

The New Life Children’s Center is located below the dam, near the CRRC Rec Center. Sixty girls live on-site, most of them with a history of abuse or neglect – some severe (see related story). Although state funds pay their basic room and board, there is no money for frivolous traditions such as birthdays or Christmas, something so many other children take for granted.

Each time I visited with Bridget about her role in the annual Christmas fundraiser for the girls and the special dinner prepared for them each month, she would begin her answer with “a group of women in business”. She is quick to emphasize she does not do this alone. This is a role of many – those who contribute their time and money out-of-pocket month after month to ensure these girls have a taste of home.

Once a month for the past eight or nine years, this group of women in businesses have prepared a home-cooked meal for the girls at New Life – women with varied lives – from tough backgrounds or orphanages to career women, shop owners, and hair dressers. Their primary intent, however is more than motherly. They want to be role models and demonstrate first hand that women can succeed in business so that these girls will know they can, too. As Bridget says, the message is that, “although they may have started out on a bumpy road, if they stay with it and get the training they are now offered, they can be successful, too.”

The girls look forward to the monthly dinner and the women do, too. The choice to spend their time and money is not viewed as an expense but is instead rewarding. At Christmas, these women in businesses cook a fine old-fashioned meal with turkey, cornbread dressing made from scratch, homemade pies, cranberry sauce and the works. Santa is there, too. The girls make a wish list ahead of time with their clothing size and preferred color, maybe a book they’d like to have. Each woman gets a ID number of a girl, a Christmas wish list, and shops for one more girls.

Donations of any kind throughout the year are gratefully accepted. Sometimes professional clothing or furniture that the girls may not need is donated to the Comal County Women’s Center in New Braunfels, a safe haven for abused women and their children. This is another organization Bridget contributes to regularly.

In 1993, soon after Bridget began her last career choice as a Real Estate Broker, she moved to Canyon Lake to eventually retire in the beautiful Hill Country. Soon after her move here, she quickly became involved in volunteer work. Again her choices reflect her love of interacting with people and her passion to give back. The Hill Country and Canyon Lake are lucky to have her here.

The women in business group needs sixty individuals or business sponsors to donate so that they can spend about \$50 for each girl for Christmas. This could be you. Call Bridget if you would like to participate with their annual fundraiser or if you would like to contribute toward the monthly meal. She can be reached at Scenic River Properties at 964-3127. This is your chance to give this season. Call now.