

# Backpack Buddies serves GISD students

## WOMEN HELPING OTHERS

Anne Marshall

Members of Women Helping Others learned about and supported Georgetown Backpack Buddies this past month.

Backpack Buddies is a nonprofit that provides much needed food to food insecure children in the Georgetown school system, feeding them over the weekend and in the summer months.

Born out of the thought, “Because Hunger doesn’t take a break on the weekends,” the program started as a pilot project by the Georgetown Ministerial Alliance in 2009, growing from serving 50 children to over 1,000. It continues to grow by approximately 20 percent with the start of each new school year.

Students served are eligible for the “free or reduced price breakfast and lunch program” on school days. Georgetown Backpack Buddies provides a weekend food pack to these students, with the goal that the students

will come to school on Monday mornings nourished and ready to learn.

The estimated 1,000 students who are enrolled in the program are provided packs of

9-10 nutritious nonperishable food items to take home for the weekend to supplement the family food supply. The food goes to children from K-12 in 18 GISD schools for the 40 week school year. Any child whose family qualifies for free/reduced meals at GISD and registers for the program is served.

Each week, over 100 volunteers gather to assemble and deliver bags to each campus to be taken home by the students for the weekend. The annual value of the school packs is \$180 to \$200 per student, with a weekly food bag costing approximately \$5 per bag.

In Georgetown ISD, about 42 percent of students — about 5,000, — qualify for the program.

The funding for this organi-

zation comes from grants, foundations, civic organizations, churches and individuals and support comes from the School District, Georgetown Health Foundation, Seeds of Strength, Central Texas Food Bank and City of Georgetown.

## WHO Meals On Wheels fundraiser a success

Through the WHO’s annual Meals on Wheels fundraiser to support Opportunities for Williamson & Burnet Counties, the nonprofit received \$53,181 in individual donations — and \$50,000 match from St. David’s Foundation — for a total of \$103,181 raised this summer.

Congratulations and thank you to WHO members, Sun City and Georgetown for supporting this fundraiser.

This fundraiser benefited the Madella Hilliard Senior Center in Georgetown to support their Meals on Wheels clients in Sun City as well as the Georgetown area. Neighbors helping neighbors is what this fundraiser is all



Backpack Buddies President Rusty Langford accepts a Women Helping Others donation from WHO Vice President Maria Tolleson.

about.

Dori Yeater, director of development for Opportunities for Williamson & Burnet Counties, thanked donors and volunteers.

“Thank you so much for your continued partnership with Opportunities for Williamson & Burnet Counties,” she said. “We truly appreciate your commitment to fighting food insecurity

in seniors through our Meals on Wheels Program. With your help, our homebound seniors receive a nutritious meal, a wellness check, and a friendly visit from a Meals on Wheels volunteer. Y’all have surpassed your goal of \$50,000.”

Want to volunteer? Call Opportunities at 512 763-1400, Ext. 2.