

The Good Samaritan Center



"A HEALING PLACE"

Providing a safe, Christ-centered environment that gives our patients quality, coordinated, and affordable health care.

Fall 2021

Hometown Heroes

By John Willome

I still remember the first time I met my friend Russell. We were seven years old in Ms. Nickel's second grade class. Forty-four years have passed since the day we met, and now Russell is a nurse practitioner in an ER east of San Antonio.

I texted him in mid-August and asked how he was holding up with the latest COVID surge. I'd heard stories of what the staff at Hill Country Memorial was facing, and I wanted to check in:

"Yep, it's that bad. We have a 24-bed ER. Seventeen of those beds, as of this morning when I left, are filled with intubated COVID patients. In the last three days, three people have died that are 36 years old or younger with no medical history. Totally scary and out of control." It's the frontline providers like Russell who I cannot thank enough. He was a good kid then, and he's a great man now.

But there are others in addition to the usual suspects of doctors, nurse practitioners, physician's assistants, nurses, and medical assistants. There are lab techs, custodians, cafeteria staff and countless unseen others making our hospitals work. Heroes, one and all.

And I do not want to forget the EMTs who expose themselves when they transport a COVID patient to the hospital. Or the nursing home workers at every level. And law enforcement who do not have the luxury to check someone's COVID status before engaging with them.

I could go on and on, but there is only so much space here. There is one more group, however, I want to acknowledge: educators and everyone involved in schools and daycares. We recognize you are dealing with an incredibly complicated situation, and we appreciate the work you are doing with the children of our community.

I am grateful for all of these people and proud to be part of a community where you live and serve. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you!



Thanks to three individual donors and a generous capital grant from the Cailloux Foundation, the Center was able to update its original HVAC system this July. Two of the 17-year-old units (left) sit beside a pair of new, more energy-efficient units (right) during the installation. The new system provides consistent, reliable heating and cooling for our patients, volunteers and staff.

A Samaritan's Story

In July, our executive director, John Willome, received a prayer request about a baby — just two days old — who was having seizures. Willome was on his way to our chapel to pray for the baby when a woman in the lobby stopped him.

"Are you the chaplain?" she asked.

He replied, "No, I'm the executive director, but I would be glad to sit and visit with you for a while."

They entered the chapel, sat down, and she told him her story. Her son is in prison. His wife had unrelatedly died in a house fire, and the woman is now estranged from his children, who comprise her remaining family. Because of her physical ailments, the woman has trouble working and is currently living with a friend, who had brought her to her appointment that day.

After she finished her story, John shared why he was heading to the chapel in the first place—to pray for the new baby and his parents. The woman was touched by the story. Her friend joined them in the chapel, and together they prayed for the woman's difficult situation and for this precious young child's life.

It was one of those moments that is hard to put into words. Yes, we are here for the immediate and obvious physical and emotional needs of our patients through our medical, dental, and counseling programs. Our mission also says we start by providing a safe, Christ-centered environment. We are grateful we gave both that woman and her friend such an environment that morning. We are also grateful that the baby for whom we prayed is doing great, off of any meds and has no scheduled follow-ups.

We didn't solve all of the woman's problems that morning, other than helping address her physical ailments. When she left, she had the same circumstances she had brought to the clinic that day. But she was able to have someone join with her and agree with her in prayer. The Holy Spirit was able to touch her.

We think she would tell you it was a good day.

It was for us.

OUR WISH LIST

\$600 for gas-powered generator to keep clinic medication refrigerators operational during power outages.

\$1,000 Landscaping river rock to be placed against building foundation

\$1,100 Essential replacement part for dental vacuum system

Please call the Center to verify if someone has donated your item.

Thank you!

Raeann Reid is Branching Out!

In coaching, you never want to be the coach who follows the legend. The same is true in most other areas of life, including finding someone to direct the Center's landscaping activities upon the recent retirement of well-known Hill Country Master Gardener **Peggy Benson**.

Happily for us (and our native gardens) **Raeann Reid** was not only able but willing to accept responsibility for keeping GSC the prettiest doctor's office in town. A longtime landscaping volunteer, Raeann was hand-picked by Peggy (in agreement with the others) to fill her garden shoes.

Nearly every month Raeann is one of a host of green-thumbed helpers who faithfully arrive in the early morn to groom the Center's grounds: pulling weeds, raking leaves and pruning the myriad flowering bushes and trees.

Now, Raeann is additionally responsible for organizing our volunteer landscapers' schedules, deciding which plants need to be removed or replaced, and determining which materials and quantities — mulch and rocks — are needed to keep our beds beautiful and naturally weed-free.

All of our landscaping volunteers are a tremendous asset to our clinic, and we are especially grateful to Raeann for expanding her role.



Pictured above, three of our group of dedicated landscape Volunteers. Seen (left to right) are: Chuck Fitzsimmons, Raeann Reid and Kathy Lewis. They are busy prepping GSC's native landscape for the coming fall season.

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Thank You!

Yes, I want to help!

You are welcome to help us in any way that you feel led to be involved. 65% of our budget comes from private donations so those are important to us. But we need volunteers and "Wish List Items" too. We appreciate any way you want to be involved.

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The Good Samaritan Center

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“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man...?” Luke 10:36a

There’s Always a Smile Under That Mask

Many of the folks staffing the Good Samaritan Center’s front desk are often members of our corps of devoted volunteers who give their time and expertise to help keep the Center running. Once such person — for the last 15 years! — is Audrey Schwarz.

Despite being born in Louisiana, Audrey, like the saying goes, got to Texas as soon as she could. At the age of 6, she and her parents moved to the tiny town of Newton in southeastern Texas, where her father was a heavy machinery maintenance operator.

She attended technology school in Nacodoches, training to be a certified surgical technologist, a.k.a., operating room scrub tech. After she married rancher Jack Schwarz, Audrey devoted herself to being a full-time homemaker.

Jack and Audrey arrived in Fredericksburg in 2002, but there wasn’t much culture shock. “Jack was a member of one of the old Fredericksburg families,” she said. “It’s his grandfather Charles Schwartz whose name is on the cornerstone of the Main Street building where Insight Gallery is currently located.”

Audrey believes being a good neighbor is one of the virtues of a life well-lived. She heard about the Good Samaritan Center from Mary Wilson, one of our first volunteers whose service predates the current building. “Mary told me it was a wonderful place to help, so I called Cheri (Snyder, the volunteer coordinator at the time) and made an appointment,” she said. “The rest is history.”

Audrey works the Center’s front desk every Thursday morning. “The Good Samaritan Center is one of the best things in our town. There’s such a need. Being here to greet the patients helps them, and it helps me.”

In addition to GSC, Audrey is a regular volunteer at the Fredericksburg Theater Company (where she enjoys watching the plays) and she pulls monthly duty at St. Vincent de Paul Society’s thrift store on behalf of GSC.

When not busy volunteering or traveling around Texas and Florida to see her grown children and seven grandchildren, Audrey enjoys visiting museums (“I’m a real history buff.”), sharing a seafood or Mexican dinner with friends, taking walks with her neighbor, or hanging with her sisters. The oldest of nine children, Audrey has only three sisters still living. “We get together every three or four months,” she said. “It’s great fun, and I really look forward to seeing them.”

We look forward to seeing Audrey every week, and so do our patients.



“The Good Samaritan Center is one of the best things in our town. There’s such a need. Being here to greet the patients helps them, and it helps me.”

Audrey Schwarz
 Front-desk volunteer