



# Pathways to Sustainable Living

Fall 2016

## Back to School Fiesta Celebrates 10 years, Helping 500 Students in 2016.

The Fiesta started in 2006 with 100 students. In 2016, new school supplies, backpacks, and \$15 Payless Shoes gift cards were provided to 475 local students (441 preregistered + 34 walk-ins), along with new books provided by Wimberley Rotary Club. We continued to fill sacks and provide backpacks the first few weeks of school, assisting another 25+ students. Thank you to all of our volunteers for all of the hours of hard work, organizing, shopping, distributing, and sacking. The Barnabas Connection could not be more grateful to the many partners who make the annual Back to School Fiesta a possibility.

During the Fiesta, Lion's Club Vision screenings tested 97, with 16 students needing referrals for vision assistance and 9 Hairdressers volunteering their services, provided 80 free haircuts: Samantha Kingsley, Regina Rogers, Joffa Wubbena, Kelsey Griffis, Rashana Lynn, Leesa Stafford, Jennie Horvath, Brooke Herrada, and Bridget Cook. See the 2016 Back to School Fiesta Sponsors—[barnabasconnects.org/program-services/back-to-school-fiesta/](http://barnabasconnects.org/program-services/back-to-school-fiesta/).

## Best BUDS Off to a Great Start in October!

After the continued success of the Back to School Fiesta, The Barnabas Connection developed a pilot program for education assistance initially based at Scudder Primary. The program, Best BUDS, aims to match local community members with WISD students struggling with reading and math in the primary grades.

The program focuses on the themes of building understanding, and developing students (BUDS). Reading proficiency by the third grade is the most important predictor of high school graduation and career success. Yet every year, more than 80% of low-income children miss this crucial milestone. The Barnabas Connection hopes that through mentoring and one on one learning assistance provided by Best BUDS, we can help bridge the educational gap for these students. Nineteen adult volunteers are currently working with students at Scudder Primary!

## Christmas Store Gearing Up for December 3.

Planning is underway for the Christmas Store, a recent program of the Barnabas Connection that started in 2014 geared towards providing Christmas Assistance that builds dignity. New items in the store are priced at 75% off retail. 60 Families were allowed to spend up to \$35 for anyone they wanted to shop for in 2015.

We are excited to have Cypress Creek Church, Unity Church of Wimberley, Wimberley Presbyterian Church, and Wimberley United Methodist Church as partners providing items for the store. Wimberley Rotary Club is also on board and will be providing new books for children in each family. A location is still being sought for the temporary store that will be open to families selected from an application process. More information to come!



Example of a \$35 purchase by a family.

## Save the Date for Senior Expo—55+ - February 10!

We are partnering again with the Wimberley Senior Activity Center on this great resource event. Exhibitor registration information coming soon! We will also be promoting the same day a shop local day with local merchants to help support The Barnabas Connection and our work in the community.

**Volunteers Needed!** Volunteer opportunities cover a variety of needs, skills, and time commitments from our resource referral helpline to fundraising and administrative help to special projects. Please consider working with us to make our work even more effective in the community. If you would be interested in learning more contact Vicki McCuiston at [director@barnabasconnects.org](mailto:director@barnabasconnects.org) or sign up at the online form available at [www.barnabasconnects.org/contact/](http://www.barnabasconnects.org/contact/)

# Flood Recovery Celebrates Completing Several Long-Term Rebuilds.

Since August 1, 2015, after transitioning away from emergency response, the Barnabas Connection has case managed clients impacted by first the May 2015 Memorial Day flood and then the October 2015 All Saints flood. Some clients have required minimal assistance due to support provided by flood insurance supplemented by FEMA benefits. In other cases, where the clients had limited resources to manage their recovery, we have completed from the studs and ground up rebuilds. The role that the Barnabas Connection has played is through case management with the client, funding the materials and licensed contractors sometimes in partnership with other funders like Cypress Creek Church and Baptist Disaster Response, and coordinating with the Blanco River Regional Recovery Team (BR3T) for volunteers and construction supervision.

Each project moves at its own pace, depending on the scope of work and resources at hand. Available volunteers are clearly a key component. We have benefited from teams of church youth groups, Americore participants, World Renew volunteers, SBP volunteers, Nomads (traveling RV group), and more. Each group has varying levels of skills and abilities which also requires coordination and supervision. Daryl Ready of Lutheran Social Services serves as the construction manager for the BR3T and has to cover projects from Wimberley to Martindale. In July, the Barnabas Connection hired a part time construction manager, Bill Tarwater to assist Daryl with Wimberley job sites so we could ease the strain on Daryl and at the same time, make sure our Wimberley projects were progressing as best as they could. Bill is very active with Wimberley Habitat for Humanity and a great member of our team. In October, we will be wrapping up multiple projects that have spanned 6 to 8 months of intensive effort provided by our staff and volunteers. It is a tremendous celebration to complete the work and get these homeowners back in their homes at long last.

Case management has evolved with several transitions over the last year and half, starting with two disaster case managers provided by BCFS—Heloise and Maritza, to Gina Maples working on October and Memorial Day cases, supplemented by Henry Alonzo of Family Endeavors working on Memorial Day cases.

**WIMBERLEY flood survivors (all renters and homeowners):** If you continue to need assistance and have not completed an intake interview, please schedule an appointment. To make an appointment with the Barnabas Connection for long-term recovery casework and financial assistance please call 512-842-7148 or e-mail [barnabasfloodhelp@gmail.com](mailto:barnabasfloodhelp@gmail.com). Intake interviews are by appointment only.

Wimberley Cases May 2015 - October, 2016:  
91 closed (82 Memorial, 9 October)  
6 pending closure  
28 open (23 Memorial, 5 October)  
8 waiting until rebuild (7 Memorial, 1 October)  
90+ Family Endeavors (8 funded so far)  
Approximately \$775,000 spent to date, with additional \$175,000 pledged for current clients. Still conducting intakes with new clients, even at this point. Another 150+ on the Memorial Day FEMA list that will be checked on with assistance from Family Endeavors.



Pictured L to R: Henry Alonzo of Family Endeavors, and Barnabas' Gina Maples and Bill Tarwater.

## Please Include Barnabas in Your Giving Options!

All donations are deeply appreciated and tax-deductible. Please donate online at [www.barnabasconnects.org](http://www.barnabasconnects.org) or send to: The Barnabas Connection, PO Box 737, Wimberley, Texas 78676.



We are grateful to Allman and Associates for performing our 2015 audit and 990.

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