

Pflugerville Police Department Chief of Police Jessica Robledo

To Aftermath:

I would like to nominate the Blue Guardian Pflugerville & Round Rock Chapter mentorship program for this award. Below you will learn some history of the creation of this program.

The Blue Guardian Program was created in Austin Texas in 2015 by an Austin Police Administrator. The program worked with Austin's oldest foster home; "Helping Hand Home for Children." This new mentorship program unites foster children in the DHS system with police officer mentors.

Benefits:

It allows children to get to see law enforcement in a different light and learn about "**giving back**." These children are exposed to a *special view of law enforcement* and can bridge a gap where fear may have been instilled. They are exposed to community service which allows them to experience feeling good about their contribution and doing something worthwhile for the community they live in. This will strengthen and build their self-esteem.

It will help open dialogue which would never occur because of the stigma in the news about police. It allows them to see law enforcement as "**guardians**", approachable, and viewed in a different light. Once a trust is established the child will embrace the mentor's advice, constructive criticism and gain self-esteem and confidence.

This allows law enforcement to be seen as true ambassadors for children who don't have a voice. This allows law enforcement professionals to truly "give back" and make a difference in a child's life who may need short or long term mentorship. It provides law enforcement an opportunity for emotional capital and balance when they make a contribution in a child's life.

History:

Helping Hand Home for Children came into being in 1893 when a baby girl was abandoned at the Austin railway station. Several women who were leaders in the missionary societies of their various churches were moved by the baby's story and decided to care for the child. Word of this selfless act spread and over time more and more children were brought to the women. As their needs and size grew, the women formed a small orphanage to care for children in need. HHH moved from a small cottage to a larger home and eventually to the current location in 1925.

Over time, as orphans were placed in individual foster families rather than group homes, HHH shifted its focus exclusively to healing severely abused children through residential treatment. The Residential Treatment Center (RTC) provides 24-hour care for up to 41 severely abused children ages 4-13 from across the state of Texas. The RTC's goal is to help children heal and give them the tools to succeed when they return to a family setting. In 1995 the HHH Child Placing Agency began providing therapeutic foster care services, and adoption services were added in 2008. In the same year the Helping Hand Home/University of Texas Charter School opened its doors and began providing on-site specialized education for up to 24 children.

Since 1893, the Helping Hand Home for Children has provided a safe haven for the most vulnerable children in our society. For more than one hundred years, the volunteers and staff have responded to the needs of children who were homeless, abandoned, neglected, and abused. The Home has evolved from an orphanage to a licensed residential treatment center with therapeutic foster care and educational services. The Home is the oldest continuously operating residential childcare agency in Travis County, a priceless resource kept strong and viable through community support.

The program has now grown from Austin Chapter into Pflugerville and Round Rock Chapters with the same mentorship model. How was this done you ask? Well the administrator in Austin became the administrator in Pflugerville, Texas.

The Pflugerville Chapter did not have a foster home in their jurisdiction so we reached out to the Round Rock Police Department. The Texas Baptist Children's Home is located in the jurisdiction of the Round Rock Police Department. We decided to partner as two agencies and create two chapters with the same home and help more kids.

Pflugerville Police Department Chapter has created a unique model in partnership with the Round Rock Police Department with the Texas Baptist Children's Home (TBCH). TBCH has participated in the following events with PPD:

- Lake Runs with new police recruit class
- Blue Santa Delivery day
- Different events held at TBCH
- Several summer educational life classes have been scheduled for TBCH kids

A Little about the Texas Baptist Children's Home:

Louis & Billie Sue Henna of Round Rock dreamed of providing quality Christian care for abused and neglected children in Central Texas. This dream became a reality in 1950, when they donated 112 acres of land and five newly constructed buildings (three cottages, an administration building, and a superintendent's residence) to the Baptist General Convention of Texas for the purpose of establishing the Texas Baptist Children's Home.

TBCH provides numerous supportive services for the child while he/she is in placement. These include: individual, family and group therapy, recreational opportunities, independent living classes, tutoring, plans of service, worship services, Bible study, choir groups, and mission opportunities.

Highlights:

Blue Guardians are in contact and make themselves available during critical times to a TBCH kid's life especially when they are having life issues like abandonment, running away, inability to relate to authority house parent figure, not attending school, anger outbursts, etc.

The Blue Guardians provide Christmas gifts to children hospitalized at the Georgetown Behavioral Hospital and have donated a large television for the TBCH recreation room.

As Pflugerville Police Department Chief of Police, I would like to nominate the Pflugerville & Round Rock Blue Guardian Chapter as recipients of this award for all they do for children who desperately need mentorship.

Blue Guardians from both Chapters give of their personal time without complaint to enrich the lives of TBCH children.

The award would be used to help fund more events with TBCH and continue making a difference in the children's lives.

Thanks in advance for your consideration,





