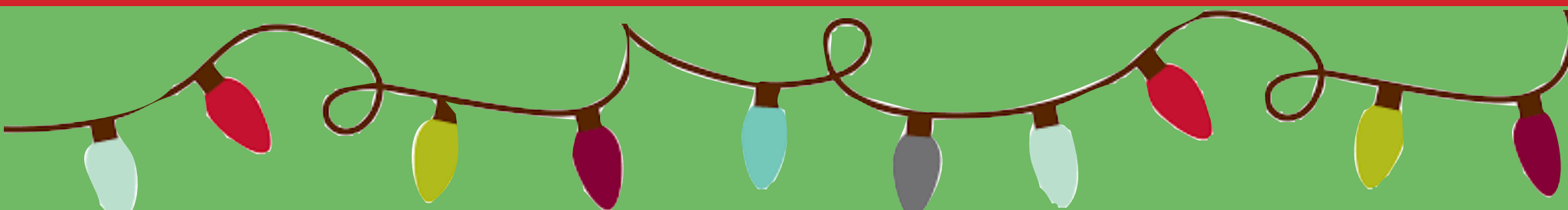




1904 North Llano Street • P.O. Box 73 • Fredericksburg, Texas 78624 • 830-997-9756 • info@needsCouncil.org



holiday giving

Three programs with many ways to give this season!



Christmas Families

Anonymously bless a family who is struggling to provide for their family.

Wish list includes practical items for family, food and gifts for kids.

Utility bill sponsorships available.

Giving Tree (for children)

Help supply counselors & teachers with items aimed at providing comfort to students.

Wish lists can be found on BBVA/Compass Bank tree.

Items may include books, socks & stuffed animals.

Angel Tree (for seniors)

“Adopt” one of our homebound senior clients.

Wish lists can be found on Chase Bank tree.

Wishlist of 2-4 items may be slippers, chocolates or books.

For more information on donating or volunteering this season call 997-9756 or visit our website www.NeedsCouncil.org

Freedom to Fly



For as long as Leticia could remember, life brimmed with darkness. “He would hit me, pull out chunks of my hair by dragging me and even bit me once so badly that I needed an ambulance,” she said of the 18 years of abuse from her ex-husband. “I never asked for help because I was so scared. If I left, he promised he would kill me. He would stop at nothing,” she added.

Leticia stayed in this unhealthy relationship for fear of deportation and permanent separation from her children.

“If I left, he promised he would kill me.”

Although she obtained a Permanent Resident Card through marriage, he threatened to call the authorities and have her sent home.

As terrible as her life was, harmful relationships were not new to Leticia. “I’ve been abused since I was a child,” she shared tearfully. Although Leticia’s children weren’t physically harmed, they witnessed the violence against their mother. Previously full of life, the youngest was scared of her father. She cried

MEMORIALS, HONORARIUMS & DONATIONS TO THE NEEDS COUNCIL

June 1, 2017 through October 25, 2017

72 Degrees
Paul & Stephanie Abadie
ACI Disposal
Advantage Copier Service
Sam & Bea Aldrich
Amazon Smile Foundation
Ambleside School of
Fredericksburg
Patty & Chris Anderson
Armadillo Farm Campground
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Austin Street Retreat
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Kermit & Laverne Boos
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Carol Bottlinger
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First Baptist Church -
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Foods
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Gillespie County
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Hill Country Church
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Holy Ghost Lutheran Church
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In Memory of Claribel Bierschwale
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In Memory of Hallie Collier
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Shell Oil Company
In Honor of John Haebig &
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Carol Shepherd
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Cheryl & Alex Sione
In Memory of Kenneth Lochte
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St Paul Lutheran Church
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Fredericksburg
The Telephone Man
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Vernon & Linda Treibs
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Trinity Lutheran Church
Paul & Jaydean Urban
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David & Eloise McGinnis
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Memorial Presbyterian Church
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Richard & Cydney Mickelson
Charles Miller
Ward & Pat Miller
Ed Millis
Ricky & Judy Moellering
Virginia Mohr
Rick & Mara Moretti
Kirsten Moss



**A special
"Thank You"
to all of our
anonymous
donors**

excessively and became increasingly withdrawn. A learning disability was suspected due to her inability to pay attention in school.

In 2014, after Leticia spent years taking medication for depression and had thoughts of suicide, she decided it was time for a change. "My youngest started acting like him, yelling and hitting me and other kids at school. I could see it was affecting them, it was time to leave."

Leticia's courageous first step was to go to the Needs Council. "They gave me a big opportunity to change my life. When I knocked on the door, they never said no, they helped me quickly." The Needs Council helped Leticia and her two daughters with an apartment and provided counseling to assist them in healing from years of abuse. During the holidays they were placed on our Christmas Families program and were "adopted" by a donor. "After I left the Needs Council I finally felt like I could breathe," she exclaimed. "I could see everything for the first time - the color of the sky, the color of the flowers. Before, all I saw was darkness."

Leticia has a whole new life - classes improved her English, then she obtained her GED, and finally she worked diligently to gain U.S. Citizenship for herself! "While I was at work, I'd listen to the 100 questions with headphones so I made sure to get them right," she beamed proudly. She plans to attend college to become a social worker for a women's shelter. Leticia has full-time employment and is very much appreciated for her work ethic. If that wasn't enough, Leticia also keeps her grandson in the evenings while her eldest daughter works. "I don't want to leave him with anyone else," she smiled.

Leticia is now re-married with a healthy relationship she didn't realize was possible just a few short years ago. She is proud to say her new husband is "a dream" and is incredibly loving and a wonderful father to her youngest daughter. She has flourished in the new environment; concerns of a learning disability faded fast as she excelled in all subjects!

When asked what advice she would give to someone in her former situation Leticia exclaimed, "You can leave, you can - he hurt me for 18 years - you don't have to wait that long before you get help. The Needs Council opened a good door for me. They closed the bad door and put in many bolts, they can do that for you too."

Leticia has tremendous gratitude for the Needs Council and the donors who made this new life possible. She joyfully stated, "I want to let everyone who helped me know how much I appreciate what they've done. "The Needs Council opened their arms and made me feel like I was family when I felt so alone. I was like a bird living in a cage, but now I am finally free." ♥

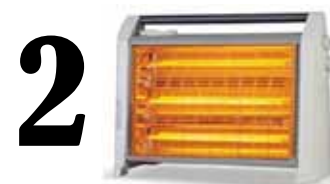


"After I left the Needs Council I finally felt like I could breathe."

christmas wishlist



gift cards

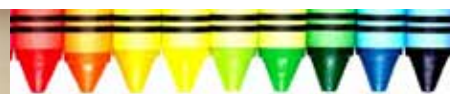


heaters



coats for kids

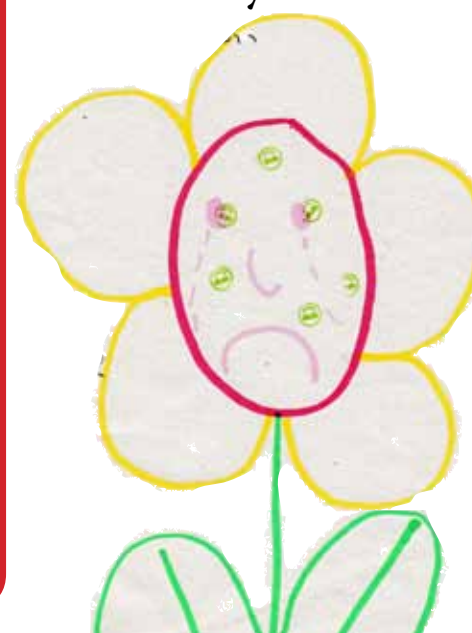
Drop items off at the Needs Council during regular business hours



Thanks to you
729 Kids
received the
tools to
succeed this
year in school!

**Thank you for
Supplying Our Students!**

A counseling client encourages you to "turn your frown upside down" & "be happy".



The face she drew is sad, but she placed happy faces all over to show her progress. Our counseling helps children & adults suffering with many issues including domestic violence, grief, divorce & more.



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Meet Gabi & Don

*Food-4-Kids Champions,
passionately serving kids*

After moving to Fredericksburg from Florida, Gabi and Don Murray asked God for direction on how they could make a difference. The next Sunday in the church bulletin was a call-out for Food-4-Kids volunteers, and the rest is history. Married for almost 16 years, these two have spent the last nine as devoted volunteers for the Needs Council.

For 33 weeks during the school year, they not only shop for the food, but pack and deliver as many as one quarter of the 200 bags of weekend nourishment provided to children in our county. Their routine each week is akin to a well-oiled machine. Gabi makes the list for the week. Don does inventory in the room they have transformed into a food pantry for Food-4-Kids. He retrieves milk and protein items from the Needs Council and purchases the remainder with funds designated by parishioners at First Baptist Church. Gabi packs the bags and volunteers (Richard & Rita Franssen, Larry & Cynthia Berkman, and Winnie Steinweg) help Don deliver to the schools. Beyond the typical items given to the kids, this dynamic duo adds special treats during the holidays. "The counselors say that the kids' faces just light up, that means we're doing something right," Don said.



them – Leticia wants to educate other women who are suffering right now. She wants to pull them back up on their feet and remind them of their value. I can picture the excitement of her future college professors when they see her determination to help others along with her drive to improve herself. Her story reminds me of Nelson Mandela's words, "It always seems impossible until it's done". All of us get stuck at some point in our life thinking the challenge we face is too great – that giving up is the only option...then somehow the right person arrives to help or a new pathway opens up

before us the and the "impossible" becomes possible. Getting beat down by abuse can wreak havoc on one's faith and belief in their own innate abilities. Communities of support are the antidote to a lifetime of abuse. Extensive counseling and often financial support while establishing a new life are critical on the road out of abuse; it is never quick and never easy. This story is only one of the innumerable lives your support has changed. We can't thank you enough for providing the resources that allowed us to help Leticia get HER life back!

Director's Corner

I hope you find time to read Leticia's story (front page); unlike many who rightfully wish to keep their abusive past behind

It's hard to believe that hunger is present in our own backyard, but nationally one in six people are considered food insecure. "Most people wouldn't know we have hungry kids that are left home alone," Gabi said. "How could we dare not do this?"



When Gabi is not working on Food-4-Kids or loving on their ice cream lovin' German Shepard, Nimitz, her passion is hand quilting special gifts for others. Her Cajun roots inspired her love of cooking, which she does often. Don serves on various church committees, is a community representative at the primary school, and is a member of noon Rotary Club. He has enjoyed being a Ham Radio Operator since 1959 (call letters W4WJ) and in his previous life as a video editor also won three Emmys - incredibly one from the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, Korea.

The Murray's passion for children is evident in their steadfast commitment to the Food-4-Kids program. Although Gabi and Don may never meet the children who receive the fruits of their labor, they take joy in knowing they are making a difference in their lives. "That's where our energy comes from," Gabi said. They also encourage others who are considering volunteering to get involved. "The joy you get from volunteering far outweighs the work. We're not people who can write big checks, but this, anybody can do."

I hope you and your loved ones have a wonderful Christmas!

I hope you and your loved ones have a wonderful Christmas!

Cindy Heifner
Executive Director

HILL COUNTRY COMMUNITY

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