



## Needs Council 2022 Board Members

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- Mark Peterson - Treasurer
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## Director's Corner

**Kinship: "Not serving the other, but being one with the other." – Greg Boyle, S.J.**



I was reminded recently of the value in knowing someone cares about us. One of our domestic violence clients stopped by "just to say hi" as her counselor was out of town. She talked about how the Needs Council staff makes her feel like family. Although her counseling sessions are often difficult, she truly appreciates her counselor. She said the sessions give her self-esteem a boost while providing tools for healing the emotional pain from her traumatic abuse.

In the midst of this - two steps forward one step backward healing journey - she was diagnosed with a serious health complication. She is taking it one day at a time but feels like her body is betraying her. She said

through tears, "Now that I'm finally starting to heal my heart, I get hit with this physical pain... without you all I don't know that I'd make it".

Listening, holding, and just being present for the telling of these painful stories creates kinship. As a staff we know it's both a privilege and a continual lesson in humility. Life gives everyone random opportunities to be loving, kind, and compassionate - the Needs Council gives us daily opportunities to be "here" for our *Neighbors in Need*. Thank you for your KINSHIP in supporting this work.

*Cindy Heifner*  
Executive Director



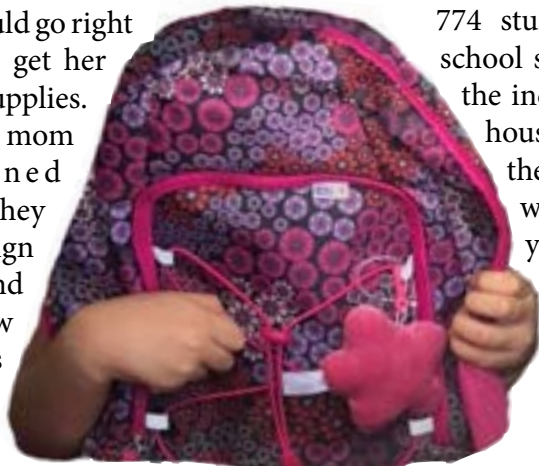
Summer 2022

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



"Lila" came home from her last day of second grade with her big, brown eyes lit up and a huge grin on her face. Her mom assumed she'd had fun at her class party but soon realized something else was making her child so happy. Lila waived a colorful piece of paper that read, *Need Help with School Supplies?*

Lila remembered how fun it was to pick out her very own, brand new, pink backpack last summer. Her mother smiled as she relayed that Lila was so excited and asked if they could go right away to get her new supplies. Her mom explained that they could sign up and the new supplies would



Lila gives her new backpack a big squeeze to show her excitement at last year's School Supply event.

be ready in August. Lila's mother went on to recall how much the new supplies meant to the kids last year. She had been struggling to keep ahead of the bills as one of her two employers had closed the business. Juggling child care while trying to find a new second job - there just wasn't a spare dime to spend on school supplies.

*"Something as simple as new school supplies made my children so happy, and gave us a sense of normalcy through a difficult time." - Lila's mom*

This family like so many others saw firsthand that the community cares about them. (See Lila's thank you note below) Each year the number of supplies seems to overwhelm parents with yet another financial challenge. Last year 774 students were assisted with our school supplies program. We all know the increasing costs of food, gas, and housing - we expect an increase in the number of kids needing help with school supplies. Thank you for considering a donation restricted to school supplies or purchasing items from the list to the right.

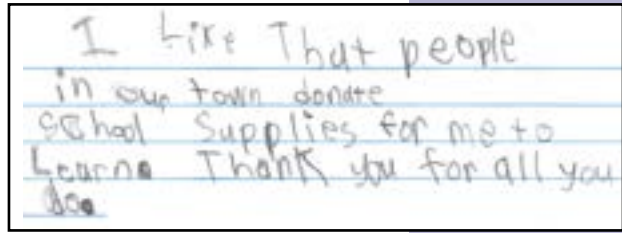
**Supplies can be dropped off @ Needs Council during business hours**

Target Wishlist  
tgt.gifts/needscouncil

### Items Needed

- Notebook Paper, wide rule
- Binders, 3 ring- 1.5" & 2" sizes
- Pencil Sharpener w/shaving collector
- Pocket Folders with brads, all colors
- Pencils
- Subject Dividers, plastic with pockets
- Pens black, blue or red
- Crayola Crayons, regular & twist up
- Highlighters, any color
- Crayola Colored Pencils
- Pink Pearl Eraser
- Crayola Watercolors
- Spiral Notebook, wide rule 70 page
- Crayola Markers, classic broad line
- 5 Subject Spiral Notebook
- Expo Dry Erase Markers, all Colors
- Composition Notebooks
- Pencil Sharpener w/shaving collector
- Glue Sticks
- Elmer's Glue 4oz
- Scissors, pointed and rounded tip

**Deadline is July 14th!**



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PO Box 73  
Fredericksburg, TX 78624



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# Medical Transportation



Every time we are asked what our greatest volunteer need is, the answer is always the same... Medical Transportation! That name sounds a little intimidating, doesn't it? What exactly is Medical Transportation? Well, we're glad you asked. Medical Transportation is simply picking up a senior citizen and driving them to their doctor's appointment, and then bringing them home. As we age, our need to see various doctors tends to increase, while our ability to drive decreases. The seniors who are part of our program can no longer drive and do not have a spouse or family nearby to take them. They rely on our cherished volunteers to get them to their primary care physicians, eye appointments, dental appointments, pain management, and other specialists. Sometimes their appointments are in Kerrville, San Antonio, or Austin, but mostly they are in Fredericksburg.

The beauty of this program is that it is all based on pairing up a volunteer who is available to drive, and a senior who is in desperate need of a driver. We rarely have to turn someone away and that is only because we are extremely fortunate to have the selfless volunteers that we do, like Diane Stevens, who has been driving our clients for over 16



years. Diane is such a positive person and it is hard not to be happy when you hear the joy in her voice. **"I try to make the [seniors] feel better about themselves, it brings a smile to my heart to help people,"** she said.

"Bonnie" is a client with many health challenges who is especially grateful for her drivers. She was recovering from an injury that required rehabilitation appointments multiple times per week to restore her to health. She tells us that she appreciates our help and that our volunteers keep her on track when they call to remind her of her upcoming appointments. A doctor's office worker named Sue said, **"It is really helpful for her to have the transportation. [The rides] relieve her anxiety."**

Our volunteer drivers not only provide a tangible service to our seniors, they also provide an emotional one as well. A common theme among those who receive rides is that they are so thankful to have someone who cares enough to take them to the doctor, and come to view their drivers like family. Oftentimes they are afraid to ask for help, as most have been self-sufficient all their lives but find themselves much more vulnerable as they age. Our clients will thank us profusely for finding them rides, and our drivers tell us that they get more out of it than the seniors do. Diane said, **"I have met so many wonderful people. Not only are you helping somebody, you are helping yourself. Helping others makes the world go 'round'."**

It really is a lovely partnership that we hope you will consider being a part of. Whether you want to drive once a month or multiple times per week, in town or out of town, there is a spot for you. If you are interested in making a tremendous difference in the life of a senior, please complete an application online at [needsCouncil.org/volunteer](https://needsCouncil.org/volunteer) or call 997-9756. You'll be glad you did!

Gina Rodriguez, LCSW-A is the newest of five professional counselors at the Needs Council and we couldn't be more thrilled to have her on board. She is bilingual and comes to us with a depth of experience including former employment with Hill Country Children's Advocacy Center serving children and non-offending family members affected by abuse and trauma, which is helpful when navigating the many challenges our clients face. Her modalities include psychotherapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, strength-based therapy, play therapy, trauma informed therapy, and she is also a Certified Telehealth Provider.

When asked why she decided to get into counseling Gina shared, **"I really feel that this is my calling - where God has led me."** In addition to seeing clients at our office three days per week, she also provides one-on-one counseling to students at Harper ISD for the Needs Council, removing the distance barrier that many rural families face in receiving emotional support. Gina also holds a weekly support group there for female students called *Healthy Boundaries* with a focus on social and emotional learning; including mindfulness, kindness, interpersonal relationships, and social skills. **"I really love working with the kids,"** she said.

Gina is equally effective with our adult clients and stated, **"I think I have a strong connection with them."** She shared that one female client said, **"I feel so much better already!"** after their session. Another male client was skeptical of seeing yet another counselor and said, **"Just so you know, I've seen a lot of other counselors and it's never worked."** That same gentleman keeps coming back week after week with a big grin on his face. **"I feel they can trust me. I just see so much growth in them after every session,"** Gina said with a smile. She went on to say, **"Every client teaches me something. Everyone is unique and no two situations are the same, and each of them has totally different goals."** As a Licensed Clinic Social Worker Associate, Gina works under the supervision of Jonette Coquat, PhD, LCSW, LCDC as she has nearly completed the 3,000 hours of clinical work required to obtain her



LCSW, the highest social worker credential in Texas.

As if the Needs Council didn't keep her busy enough, Gina is also the school counselor at St. Mary's and meets with private clients as part of Stewart Counseling. When she's not saving the world, you can find her proudly supporting her husband Gabriel, their three children, and their grandson.

Gina is pleased to be part of our mission of Helping Our Neighbors in Need, **"I think the work done here is wonderful. I had no idea of the help provided to the community by the Needs Council,"** she said. The feeling is mutual, we are so fortunate to have someone with her heart and experience to serve our county's most vulnerable.