



## Needs Council 2023 Board Members

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True community is often difficult to find but always worth the effort. Several years ago, I met with a new volunteer who shared how he came to live in Fredericksburg. The corporation he worked for sent him for a business consultation that didn't pan out; instead, he found *community*.

*"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."* – **Coretta Scott King**

The day he arrived, colored balloons lined the streets as businesses and homes were honoring the memory of a child who'd developed a fatal illness. So overcome by this, he totally changed his life and moved here within the month.

We continually marvel at the courage clients in our domestic violence programs reveal. Most have endured years of abuse before pushing down their shame and embarrassment to ask for help. Our

## Director's Corner

professional counselors allow each one to take the time they need, finding themselves and learning to trust again.

You - *our supportive community* - alongside our staff and counselors become the family, the community they lean into on their path to healing. These words seem insufficient on relaying the wondrous power that your caring and support conveys. YOU are an essential component in this process of offering the life-giving nature of belonging. A mother of three boys shared, "Not only did you all literally save our lives, you made us feel like we matter - Something I had no hope of two years ago."

*Cindy Heifner*  
Executive Director



needsCouncil.org



P.O. Box 73  
Fredericksburg, TX 78624

HILL COUNTRY COMMUNITY  
**Needs Council**

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**Needs Council**

Summer 2023



1904 North Llano Street • P.O. Box 73 • Fredericksburg, Texas 78624 • 830-997-9756 • [info@needsCouncil.org](mailto:info@needsCouncil.org)

## Supply Our Students!

YES! Believe it or not, it's already time to donate school supplies for the 2023-24 school year. As our students are enjoying their summer break, we are accepting applications from qualifying families. Last year over 700 children went to school with new backpacks filled with the necessary supplies for their grade level. Each year that number grows and with costs rising on seemingly everything, we expect an even larger increase in need.

For families with tight budgets, the looming expense of \$75-100 per child for school supplies can cause great anxiety. The extra costs of school supplies, new clothes, and shoes cuts into money for groceries, utilities, rent, and other necessities. Without assistance, many children would start the school year ill-equipped and embarrassed next to their classmates with all new supplies. Our goal is to provide each child with a new backpack and supplies they can be proud of, and to provide their parents with the peace of mind that starting the school year won't strain their budget to the breaking point.

It takes the help of about 100 volunteers over four to five weeks to collect, collate, and pack the supplies by grade level and campus. We serve all of Gillespie County public schools. We'd love to add you to our volunteer list!

### If you'd like to donate to the School Supply project, you may:

1. Give funds for bulk purchasing by sending a check to P O Box 73; Fredericksburg, TX 78624 or donating online at [needsCouncil.org](https://needsCouncil.org).
2. Purchase and donate school supplies from the combined list on our website (<https://needsCouncil.org/school/>). The supplies can be dropped off at our office or shipped directly to: 1904 N Llano Street; Fredericksburg, TX 78624
3. Purchase supplies from our Walmart online registry by scanning the QR code to the right.



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## Highlighting Our Volunteers: Sharon Johnson



projects include quilts for the Lutheran Worldwide Relief program, stuffed animals and toys for local craft fairs, clothes and gifts for family, and over 300 Christmas stockings for the Needs Council's Christmas Families program. Her last sewing machine had 20 million stitches on it!

Sharon is motivated to continue volunteering when she sees the impact on the people she helps – she just loves it! Whether it's School Supplies, Food 4 Kids, Coats for Kids, Christmas Families, or any of our other programs, she loves seeing people's faces light up when they come through the door.

Sharon closes with these words about volunteering at the Needs Council, "You always leave with more than you came with. You will experience the good feeling you get from helping the community and seeing the impact on the people. There's always a need; for myself no task is too big or too small and everyone we help matters."



If you've spent any time at our office, it's likely you've met Sharon Johnson. Sharon is a Needs Council treasure who blesses many others with her talents and positive attitude. We often wonder how we got along before she became a volunteer. Outside her work with us, she's a busy grandmother who follows her grandkids activities and sports. She enjoys being part of the cook team at Holy Ghost Lutheran Church, making meals for local seniors for the Feeding John program. She also volunteers to help keep the Der Stadt Friedhof Cemetery neat and tidy.

We sat down with her to see what drew her to volunteering and what she believes it can do for anyone who chooses to serve.

After her husband passed away in 2009, Sharon began searching for ways to fill her time and her heart. When she received a Needs Council newsletter she thought, "I might need to get involved with them. The first thing I helped with was the school supplies program, but it snowballed from there." Fourteen years later, she is one of our most active volunteers.

Sharon is an accomplished seamstress, rising each morning at 4:30 and sewing until at least 7am. Some of her sewing



### New Team Member: **Ryan Hoover**

We're so happy to welcome Ryan to our team! Ryan's roots in Fredericksburg go back decades, and he and his wife have chosen to raise their 3 children here. "We're so invested in this community," he says, "this is home, and we'll be here forever." His hobbies include hunting to feed his family, playing drums, and learning new things. His creativity and passion for communication are a great addition to our organization. His role as Community Outreach Coordinator is to be the point person for volunteer coordination, donor cultivation, and messaging what we do to the community. We hope you'll give him a big "Welcome!" when you see him.



**Our biggest continuing need:**



## **Medical Transportation Volunteers**

**We are always looking for people who can drive our home-bound senior population to medical appointments in Fredericksburg and surrounding areas. These volunteers often form great friendships with those they transport. Call our office and set up a time to fill out an application.**

**830-997-9756**



When clients come in "underwater" with debt, we gently suggest a budgeting appointment with one of our volunteer financial planners. It truly is a gift to the families who decide to take advantage of this program. One couple had such overwhelming debt, their bank advised that bankruptcy might be their only option. When they explained their desire to clear the debt without filing for bankruptcy, we set them up with Cloyd Phillips, a long time Needs Council volunteer. Cloyd looked over all their loans, credit cards, etc., and told them that it was possible, but it would take a long and disciplined approach to become debt free. They said yes; they wanted to learn from Cloyd and dig themselves out of their financial mess. They met weekly, then monthly, and now Cloyd says he's just a cheerleader as they continue with the steps he provided to slowly but surely erase the debt! At first their children were in shock and complained about all the changes, but now they are following their parents' example and saving towards their own college educations.