

## Our History

Mansfield Cares was formed on August 2, 1999 by a group of concerned citizens who felt that more could be done to help those less fortunate in our community. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation with a Board of Directors and a group of Ambassadors who all serve in a volunteer capacity. The main fund-raising activity for Mansfield Cares is the annual charity ball that is held each February (formerly November) at Walnut Creek Country Club. This year marks our 11th anniversary! We consider ourselves similar to a local United Way. Our purpose is to fill any needs that are not already being met by the many other charitable organizations in our community.

Some of the funds raised at this ball have been used each year to purchase food vouchers for the community-wide Angel Tree program sponsored by a fellow non-profit organization, Common Ground. 2009 marked the largest program this year for the Angel Program with over 2,000 angels getting adopted through many community churches and other participating organizations. Donated funds from the ball have also been used each year to purchase shoe vouchers and school supplies for qualifying children in the Mansfield ISD through the community-wide Back to School Program sponsored by Common Ground. Mansfield Cares also works closely with the head nurse at the MISD and several local churches to assist qualifying children and adults with prescriptions, eye glasses, counseling services, home improvements, medical equipment, acute health care, and child care. We also help support two local food banks, Harvesting International and The Living Word Outreach, on a monthly basis. There are seven food banks in our community, who all work together through Common Ground with coordinated food drives around the city and school district.

In 2001, we sent out a survey to the many churches, schools, city, and other local groups asking for feedback as to the most important needs in our community that were going unmet. Once tallied, we went to work planning our strategy as to how to best meet the needs on our list. We have met all the needs that were on that original survey through many hours of hard work and with the help of many who donate to our cause.

In September of 2003, we opened the Mansfield Cares Medical Assistance Clinic located at 1670 E. Broad Street. The free clinic is open every Thursday from 9:00 to 12:00 (subject to change) and provides non-emergency, acute medical care to anyone in need from ages 5 to adult on a first come first served basis. Services include asthma treatments, blood pressure needs, sprains, infections, and prescriptions. The patient is required to complete a form upon the initial visit, and minors must be accompanied by a parent. These services are provided by Dr. Wendy Collini. Free dental services are also provided through our organization by various local dentists, including Dr. Barry Cole.

In 2003, we began the task of trying to build a free Medical Assistance Clinic in our community, with the intent that the Broad Street location would be temporary. This task turned out to be a real challenge!

In 2006, with the help of the City of Mansfield, we published the Mansfield Area Guide to Community Services Directory. This directory provides a listing of information and resources available in our community. Its purpose is intended to help maximize all the area organizations' outreach ministry capabilities, by helping to synergize the community's outreach goals and financial assistance. This guide is still in use, but it could use an update. The City of Mansfield at one time expressed interest in taking over the project, although at this time it has not done so.



## Our History (con't)

In 2006, Mansfield Cares created its own website at [www.mansfieldcares.org](http://www.mansfieldcares.org), which has been a great asset to our organization.

Mansfield Cares participates in the MISD Multi Scholarship program each year by providing college scholarships to qualifying MISD graduating seniors.

In 2008, we worked closely with the MISD school counselors and Council of PTA's to establish a school supply area in the already existing PTA Clothes Closet located at Erma Nash Elementary. This was a need that took a few years to coordinate, but will now help those children who are in need of school supplies throughout the year and who don't participate in the Back to School Program for various reasons. Common Ground and Mansfield Cares will provide funding via a school supply fund to The Council of PTA's. The council will then stock the supplies as needed and provide the volunteers to operate the Clothes Closet throughout the year from each school's PTA.

We also hired a part time administrative assistant in 2008 who is paid hourly for her time for the few hours she reports as non-volunteer hours. Her main purpose is to build our database of ongoing research, information, addresses, names, letters, forms, etc. and provide a point of contact for articles, paperwork, filing, scrapbook information and mail.

Other miscellaneous fundraising projects have been done over the years such as the 2004 Change for Changes coin drive program through the MISD schools, the Hometown Festival booth at Rose Park, the brick and cornerstone drive two years ago at the ball, and the Spring Golf Ball event several years ago. Individual donations are also appreciated throughout the year.

In 2009, our dream of building a facility to provide free and low cost health and dental care for those who qualify was realized with the opening of The Linda Nix Family Caring Place. This has been the most difficult undertaking of our organization. JPS Hospital, who had been providing services in temporary quarters, moved into the building on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009. It is our intent to turn over the daily operations of the facility to them. The official ribbon cutting ceremony took place on Friday, December 04, 2009.