

David and Jennifer Kelley along with their children, Destini and Bryana, have benefited from transitional housing provided by Cy-Fair Helping Hands



Photo by Lara Massey

Lending a Helping Hand

Cy-Fair residents Jean and John Dreyer make a daily difference in the community

Written by Liza Winkler

For Jean and John Dreyer, helping others is not simply a good-faith effort but the purpose of their lives. The married duo has worked tirelessly to aid Cypress' homeless with food, water, shelter, and clothing for more than two years. With support and donations from the community, they work in tandem to deliver support for those who are in dire need of a warm meal, fresh clothes, and a roof over their heads. Through these acts of kindness and showings of grace, the Dreyers continue to leave an everlasting positive impression on the community.

Starting a Movement

With a love of God and a hope for change, the Dreyers set out during the fall of 2010 to explore the Cy-Fair area streets with the desire to lend a hand to those in need. As the



Photo by Jason Lehecka

Jean Dreyer and her husband John began Cy-Fair Helping Hands in 2010 with just the two of them driving around and handing out care packages to the homeless. In 2012, they provided services to over 200 individuals and families in the Cy-Fair area.

months went by, the couple quickly became aware of several people in the community who were struggling to attain basic life necessities.

Jean Dreyer says her mission is to help individuals become self-sufficient in a process that is gradual, and usually takes about two years and ensures each is content by catering to their particular needs. "Most of [the homeless] don't have a vehicle, they don't have a place to live, and they don't have anything except what they can carry in their backpacks," she says.

The following year, the Dreyers sold their antique shop and decided to spread their mission on a full-time basis through Cy-Fair Helping Hands. Since the non-profit organization originated, the group has a variety of accomplishments such as assisting more than 200 homeless individuals with food and clothing and providing about 3,000 care packages to the homeless.

Changing Lives

Jean Dreyer says many people do not realize how many are forced into homelessness. "There are misconceptions that if they wanted to, they could get a job," she says.

Twice a week the Dreyers hand out food to the homeless along Hwy. 290. Sitting on a curb with their cat in a carrier, no jobs, no vehicle, and nowhere to go, is how Jean and John Dreyer met Ashley Butler and her husband Robert Harris. Through Helping Hands, donations, and the church, Butler and Harris have since been given a furnished trailer to live in.

Butler says she owes her gratitude and future to the Dreyers, who helped them get off the streets and find her husband a job. "They have been there any time we needed them, especially when my husband needs to go to the doctor because of his health issues," she says. "To have people like that come into your changes you. To truly understand

how they are impacting people's lives, you would have to ride along with them and witness it for yourself."

Simple Blessings

According to Butler, having air conditioning and heating as well as an actual mirror in her trailer, are precious luxuries. She urges people to appreciate what they have and to not take anything for granted.

Additionally, the Dreyers provided Butler with a general equivalency diploma (GED) study book. She now looks forward to finally earning her GED, college degree, and having a stable and rewarding career in the future.

For Jennifer Kelley, a recent recipient of transitional housing, a garbage can, laundry basket, coffee maker, bed sheets, and towels were all things she could never afford to buy even when she was working. Everyday items that often go unnoticed or unappreciated by many, were once beyond comprehension for her and her family.

Jean Dreyer describes her encounters with each person as her true path in life. "It's a blessing from God, and I sincerely believe He is directing this whole thing," she says. "If anyone had told me two and a half years ago that we would be doing this, I'd tell them they're crazy." CFM



LIZA WINKLER is a junior at Texas State University. She has donated various food products in the hopes of furthering the Dreyers' efforts in the community.

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