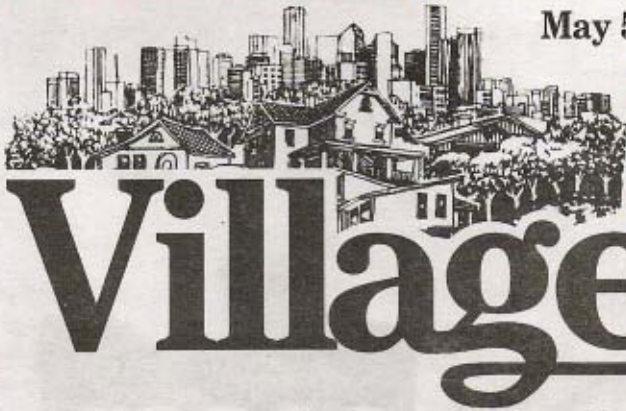


Enter the YMCA's Coloring Contest and Win a Family Membership! See p. 12

May 5, 2009

Vol. 23, No. 49



# Village

# NEWS

Mother's Day  
Gift Ideas...

See  
p. 6



Serving West University, Southhampton, Southgate, Southside Place, River Oaks, The Upper Kirby District, The Medical Center, Braeswood Place, Boulevard Oaks, Linkwood, Woodside, Old Braeswood, Morningside Place and Sunset Terrace

## West U. Council Considers Sprinkler Ordinance

By Granth Hayes

Water was the dominant theme at Monday's West U. Council meeting, with the mandatory installment of indoor sprinkler systems in all new one- and two-family homes the first big item on

the agenda.

Existing homes that undergo renovation of over 50% of their area would also have to install the systems under the proposed law, said John Brown, chief building official.

The push for sprinklers in West U. comes years after the instatement of similar ordinances in Bellaire and Southside Place.

Council opposed requiring indoor sprinklers in the past because of the expense

to homeowners. Brown says that prices have gone down since then, but that the cost of installing sprinklers still runs at \$1 to \$2 per square foot.

The average size of a  
*See Council page 10*

## Crosswalk Sunday School Class Honored as "Volunteer Heroes" St. Paul's Group "Walks the Walk"

By Donna Adair

Inside the venerable gothic structure of St. Paul's United Methodist Church at the edge of downtown Houston, Sunday school classroom space was bursting at the seams, and in the Fall of 2007 it was time to start a new young adult class.

Scouring the four-block, three-building campus, the space solution turned out to be in Abraham Station, across Fannin Street and the MetroRail track from the Sanctuary and Jesse H. and Mary Gibbs Jones Youth Building.

One half of Abraham Station is occupied by the Emergency Aid Coalition (EAC), an organization of 15-member congregations that provides food and clothing to

homeless and low income families and individuals. The other half is home to St. Paul's Rutabaga Territory after-school mentoring program, the church's Boy Scout troop, and the Prayers and Squares prayer quilt ministry.

But it is empty on Sunday mornings.

This gave the new class a mission before it even had a name. As they've focused on the EAC, others have taken notice: at this spring's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala fundraiser, the EAC honored members of St. Paul's Cross Walk Young Adult Sunday School Class as the first such group to be recognized as "Volunteer



Members of St. Paul's Cross Walk class at the Emergency Aid Coalition gala (l-r): front-Stephanie Swingle, Rev. Emily Chapman; back-Eric Frantz, Jennifer Deakins, Marian Bryant (EAC), Marcia Enggano, Joy Fulbright, Bryan Fillette, Giovanni Antipolo and Kim Mabry.

Heroes for the Hungry."

"We made the space work for us rather than against us," said Kim Mabry, director of

Young Adults. "Part of our greeting to class visitors is to open the door and show them

*See Walk page 11*

### Walk from page 1

the EAC and what we do with them.”

Since Service Days are the favorite Sundays for many class members, Cross Walk recently instituted periodic “Flip Days” when they go as a group to 9:45 a.m. worship and begin their Service Day at 11:05 so they can remain past the allotted hour to perform myriad EAC tasks, such as sorting clothes, separating beans and rice, or making bologna sandwiches.

“The EAC is a good way for us to be involved with a good cause that’s unique to us,” say Stephanie Swingle and Matt Stoner, who began attending St. Paul’s as college students at nearby Rice University. “Monday nights made it all that much more meaningful for us when we get to meet the people we are helping.”

Instituted to help the working poor, the EAC’s Monday Family Nights began around the same time Hurricane Ike hit the city, heightening the need.

“As a young adult, it’s time to do this kind of activity as a member of a church community, but I wasn’t ready to dream up my own charity,” said Eric Frantz. “The EAC infrastructure is there. We just plug in to it. But we also have some latitude in what we can do within the guidelines. It’s up to us. We can

make our own decisions.

“From here on it should be easier for us to do other things in the church. It’s a learning experience. Once we can handle this, we can handle anything,” concluded Frantz.

Despite being in their young earning years and some in graduate school, class members last summer eagerly supported the EAC’s annual Books and Backpack project that provides school supplies and related items for low income students. Two Cross Walkers each separately posted a \$500 matching challenge to the class. And they were met.

“It’s nice to have an established organization,” said Jennifer Deakins. “We know that when we do something that it works. We can see a definite impact.”

Kirby Haines likes the multi-congregational aspect of the EAC. “I have friends at First Unitarian Universalist and South Main Baptist, and they also help with the EAC through their churches. It shows that we can work together no matter your belief, you can help people who are in need.”

“It’s inspiring to see the EAC people – volunteers and employees,” said Swingle. “They are all amazing people.”

The feeling is mutual. “The Cross Walkers do everything to

help from hanging up clothes to bagging rice, beans, and laundry detergent. And they're reliable and flexible. They see what needs to be done and do it. They're very talented people," said Lydia Smyth, the EAC Program Coordinator.

"And we really welcome these young people because the EAC tends to be staffed by older, retired volunteers," said Marian Bryant, EAC Volunteer Coordinator. "Monday nights and select Sunday mornings work well with their schedules, so we work with them then, too."

"They 'get it.' They're young, and they 'get it.' It's mind-boggling working with them," concluded Theresa Jackson, EAC Congregational Liaison.

Cross Walkers also enjoy many social and learning opportunities. Each Sunday they lunch together at a different, inexpensive nearby restaurant. Many participate in a Tuesday night Bible study in a member's home. They celebrated a Seder dinner with Rabbi Robert Haas of nearby Congregation Emanu El. And their Sunday morning lessons range from deep Bible study to current events to books such as *The Shack*.



*Top: Eric Frantz fills a grocery order at the Emergency Aid Coalition's Monday Family Night, a new program that provides groceries and clothing for the working poor; lower left: During a Sunday School class work day, most Cross Walkers sort clothing for the Emergency Aid Coalition while Brandon Wheeler and others make valentines for the children of the Rutabaga Territory after-school mentoring program that meets in the same classroom space on weekday afternoons; lower right: Kim Mabry plays with a girl from a client family while her mother looks for clothing in the Emergency Aid Coalition's Clothing Center.*