

December, 2014

A MONTHLY MESSAGE FROM



MAYOR
TODD GOTTEL



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It's no secret that I feel Rowlett is truly a blessed community. What makes us a blessed community? Our people. During this time of year, as I reflect and give thanks to God for all we have been given, I would also like to take time and thank all of the individuals, organizations and businesses that continue to give back to THIS community in so many ways. In 2010, Money Magazine ranked Rowlett in its Top 25 Best Places to Live. In 2013, Movoto designated Rowlett the #1 Small City in America to Move to. Rowlett is the 19th Safest City in Texas, according to Safewise. These accolades are a testament to our amazing sense of community, which is not created entirely by having sewer access or running water (although I certainly don't want to be without either!). A community is created by its PEOPLE. One of the greatest assets Rowlett has is the sheer volume of individual citizens, organizations and businesses that volunteer to help their City, giving back more than \$1 million of their time every year! It never ceases to amaze me, the number of people who love this community and show it through their volunteerism on a daily basis.

I could give hundreds of examples demonstrating our community spirit, but here I would like to highlight just one. Recently, I met Timothy Willis when he called me concerned about utility work cutting through his driveway. I dropped by his home on the corner of Dalrock and Chiesa to look and he thanked me with some peaches plucked from a tree in his yard. Mr. Willis has lived in the small house much of his life. He grew up in it along with his 13 siblings, returned to it as a disabled adult, and on major holidays it serves as a gathering place for his extended family. The home had significant repair needs, most notably the roof and the fact that there was no heat or air conditioning, but Mr. Willis didn't bring any of that up on my visit. In fact, a few weeks later he called to invite me back over for some of the peach preserves he puts up every year! This completely humbled me. Knowing what incredibly giving folks we have in our community, I reached out to our fire department for assistance and they soon organized a one day volunteer marathon,

gathering many, many individuals, organizations and businesses willing to help. The Home Depot donated all the materials to completely remove and replace the roof and make urgent repairs to the inside of the home, including a bathroom remodel, a new front door and window replacements. Barnaby Heating & Air donated and installed a brand new HVAC system. Chick-fil-A brought lunch to feed all the hungry volunteers, who included over 40 Rowlett firefighters, police officers, members of CERT, the Rowlett Fire Explorers, individuals and churches such as Connection Community Church (C3 Rowlett).

A preacher's son, Mr. Willis sees God's hand in the events of his life, both the good and the bad. Lately, it's been mostly good, and Mr. Willis is so thankful to the individuals and businesses that have shown him such kindness.

"God spoke to me and said, '2014 is going to be your year,'" Mr. Willis told me. "I was patient and look what happened. I want to thank God for sending these angels to do my house." He and I were both so moved to see the way our beautiful, amazing Rowlett COMMUNITY came together to help one of our own!

Please see the next page for a few more shining examples of those we are so blessed to have in our community.

For some of us, the Christmas season can become a time when we get lost in the commercialism of the holiday and miss the true meaning. My wish and prayer for you during this reflective time of year is that God continue to watch over you and your family, bringing health and prosperity now and throughout the New Year!

Regards,

Mayor Todd Gottel



Celebrating our Volunteers!

Each year, the City holds The Boards & Commissions Volunteer Awards Banquet. This annual event, held this year on Friday, December 5, honors both the City's many volunteers, who exhibit remarkable dedication and share their wealth of knowledge on a daily basis, and thanks outgoing Boards and Commissions members for their service.

City Manager Brian Funderburk presented the City volunteer awards. I, as Mayor, have the honor of choosing and awarding the Richard Huff Excellence in Community Service Award, named for one of Rowlett's most civilly engaged citizens of all time!

In Fiscal Year 2014

16,437 volunteer hours were donated

\$384,625 taxpayer dollars saved

7.8 Full Time Employee equivalents!



*Richard Huff Excellence in Community Service Award
Martha Brown*

Where do I start to describe the contribution Martha Brown has made to our community? The Executive Director of Keep Rowlett Beautiful, Martha coordinates multiple parks and lakeside cleanup events, electronic recycling and document shredding events each year. She is a tireless fixture at any and all community meetings, she's a member of the

Community Investment Program Task Force and will assist in the identification of projects to include in the City's proposed 2015 Bond Election, I could go on and on. But all this just wasn't enough for Martha, nope. In 2014, she cheerfully tackled the task of writing a \$250,000 TxDOT Community Improvement Grant. And won. Our community will now be blessed with **\$250,000** to beautify SH66 (Lakeshore Parkway)!!! Get ready to see big changes...and when you do, you know who to thank...Martha Brown of Keep Rowlett Beautiful!

*Diamond Award
Lee Shaw*



Lee is the retired Director of the 911 Center in North Little Rock Arkansas and a very proud mother and grandmother. She is an amazing resource with a wealth of experience, depth of knowledge and a far-reaching network. She has been instrumental in publishing the Emergency Operations Plan and completing a grant that allowed the City to hire a full-time Emergency Management Specialist.

In just this year alone, Lee volunteered 931 hours! She is also the recipient of the 2009 *and* 2013 Volunteer of the Year Award.

*Platinum Award
DeWayne Gates*



DeWayne is not just a member of the City's Volunteers in Police Services (VIPS), but he trains new members and teaches them the proper procedures for patrol and other areas within the VIPS program. He actively recruits new members and is always one of the first to sign up to work City special events or school crossing guard duties. As if that isn't enough, he also assists our Code Enforcement Officers, performing re-inspections so that they can devote more time to improving the aesthetic beauty of our community. A devoted husband, father, grandfather, and friend, DeWayne volunteers over 400 hours every year!

*Gold Star Award
Chris & James Taylor*



Our first ever Gold Star Award went to this mother and son team. Library patrons since 2001, they have volunteered every week since June, 2013. With cheerful attitudes and bright smiles, they are a joy to work with and always friendly to both staff and patrons. One of the most important jobs in the Library is making sure that items are available for check-out and this team does just that, ensuring everything is properly shelved and the area is tidy. James is also very active in Special Olympic sports and Equest in Wylie. What a blessing they have been to the Library, they have made a real difference in our community!

Thank you to those ALWAYS ready to help...

Our community is truly blessed to have so many non-profit organizations ready to pitch in and lend a hand whenever there is a need. Some of our biggest "givers" include:

Rowlett Rotary Club

The Lions Club

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES)

Keep Rowlett Beautiful



Assisted by an incredible partner to the City, the Rowlett Chamber of Commerce, the business community in Rowlett is unparalleled in their civic spirit as well. Two examples of that are *Chick-fil-A*, who NEVER says no, regardless of what they are asked to do, and *The Home Depot*, without which community projects such as Mr. Willis' home repairs would not be possible.

My wish and prayer for you during this reflective time of year is that God continue to watch over you and your family, bringing health and prosperity now and throughout the New Year!