



Keep Irving Beautiful Newsletter



Emma's House - A Special Place

As a volunteer-based non-profit, Keep Irving Beautiful has the opportunity to work with a great variety of organizations representing all walks of life in our city. KIB first met Emma's House founder Debbie Elizondo at a community event in 2012, which led to a friendship that has continued to this day. Debbie started Emma's House as an appropriate option for special needs youth who were aging out of typical day care programs. Emma's House is a "special place for special people," a non-profit organization that provides after school services to teens and young adults with intellectual disabilities. They specialize in community-based recreational and educational activities for a group of amazing individuals, providing them with life skills to promote independence.

KIB plans a yearly visit to Emma's House, and staff is always warmly welcomed by a group that is eager to learn and join in the activities. They have learned about recycling and the environment in a fun manner, through a skit with KIB mascots Kirby and Buddy the Blue Bag, watched videos, and taken turns spinning the KIB prize wheel and winning prizes for answering questions. Last year they were the first to participate in KIB's blanket project (see story below). KIB partnered with the youth group from Holy Family Church who helped the Emma's House members make the no-sew blankets.

Emma's House is also an active participant in KIB's "Adopt-a-Spot" program. They "adopted"



Emma's House members, along with Buddy the Blue Bag, model their new safety vests and litter pickers from KIB to use at their Adopt-a-Spot.

the stretch of Shady Grove Road near Twin Wells Golf Course, close to their facility, and once a month they have an outing where they pick up litter and collect recyclables. They are often joined by volunteers from other organizations or companies who enjoy giving their time to help such a worthwhile group.

We thought so much of the good work that Emma's House does, that they were honored with a Mayor and KIB award in 2013. One of their volunteers has described Emma's House as "an amazing place filled with smiles and laughter," and we couldn't agree more.

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Did You Know?

Last month we shared some tips for saving energy. We continue that this month, with more ideas, courtesy of Earth 911, that focus on the money-saving aspect as well:

- Unplugging items not in use can save a lot of money over the course of a year, such as printers—\$130, computers—\$75, DVR—\$36, game consoles—\$23
- Fixing a water leak that drips one drop per second can save \$35 per year
- Washing in cold water instead of hot can save \$60 per year
- Lowering the hot water heater can save \$50 per year
- Replacing light bulbs with energy-saver bulbs can save \$4 per bulb, per year.



Emma's House logo says it all!

KIB's Blanket Project

Over the past year, KIB has worked with several different groups of volunteers in a project that has become very popular—that of making "no-sew" blankets which are donated to non-profit organizations. As mentioned in the Emma's House article, they were the first group to participate in this, along with the Holy Family Youth. It was such a great experience, with the teens mentoring other teens and young adults, that we started offering the opportunity to other groups, and the project really took off. KIB has provided fleece material to groups like the Young Men Service League of Cistercian, several Girl Scout Troops, and the "All Things Made New" mentoring program.

In 2017, these volunteers have given 139 hours of service in making 22 blankets, which can be either adult or baby sizes, and more are being made. Once the blankets are completed, they are donated to worthy organizations like the BBMOI Crisis Ministries, Baylor Hospital, the Irving Family Advocacy Center, and Brighter Tomorrows. The volunteers have found that this activity has been a good opportunity for service, and those who receive the blankets have been very grateful for them. It's also been a great way for KIB to expand its programming and work with new volunteers and community organizations.



Members of the "All Things Made New" mentoring program display one of the blankets they made, which was donated to the Irving Family Advocacy Center.

