



2021 IBAT Best of Community Banking Awards

Organization: Texas Bank and Trust

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Category: Pandemic Response

Healing Hands 2020

Throughout its history, **Texas Bank and Trust** has placed a high value on service. It is the common thread that connects the bank's employees to its mission and its mission to the people it serves. However, in the summer of 2020 – a time of great hardship, heartache, and pain – TBT officers and employees were asked to do more than just serve, they were asked to find a way “to heal.”

Texas Bank and Trust's “**Healing Hands Initiative**” was an undertaking of seemingly grand proportions, carried out in the most quiet and unassuming fashion. The idea was borne out of incredibly profound, reflective conversations TBT Vice Chairman and CEO Rogers Pope, Jr., had within his immediate family in late spring 2020, at the height of a period of great social unrest for our nation. It was if the world was on fire being made to face, at once, **a health crisis, an economic crisis, and a racial equality crisis.**

As the Pope family set about finding their own ways, whether it be through volunteerism or charitable donations, in which they could make a difference during this unprecedented time, Mr. Pope, Jr., contemplated how to expand this level of service to the community at large during this particular moment in history.

With an early morning call to the bank's Chief Marketing Officer, Mr. Pope, Jr., expressed his thoughts, his family's efforts, and what it would be like to extend this idea to his greater bank family. “*So many people are hurting,*” he said. “*I am trying to think of ways in which we can help heal.*” And, so exactly one year ago, the executive leadership of **Texas Bank and Trust** found an avenue through one of its most ambitious charitable acts of giving, to date, challenging its 480-member employee base to go out into their respective communities “to find ways in which to heal.”

THE INITIATIVE

The concept would be simple: the bank would provide **\$100,000** in community assistance funds to spread throughout the 15 Texas communities TBT serves, in an effort to combat the **three social crises** currently facing friends, neighbors, and loved ones.

The funds were allocated among the bank's 19 branch locations and 19 individual departments, with distributions ranging in amounts from \$2,000 to \$5,000 – depending on the number of staff members in each group. The only stipulation to distributing the funds given to the staff was that ALL monies donated (either through direct contributions or in-kind purchases) to local organizations, initiatives, and critical care causes should address one, some, or all of the three crises areas by June 30, 2020.

TBT officers and employees were asked to come together in their teams, discuss the difficult issues of the day; have sensitive, but necessary, conversations about what was happening in our world; and then identify ways through which their time, talents, along with the bank's financial resources, could make a measure of difference in the lives around them. In short, members of the TBT family were asked to extend a **healing hand** to those in need.

THE RESULTS

Twenty-five (25) days later, more than 104 unique donations had been handed out to 75 different organizations and groups throughout east and north Texas. Eighty-one (81) individual programs, initiatives, and/or worthwhile causes were bolstered by these much-needed funds and the in-kind supplies/resources provided. For many of the organizations, the need was great as the early months of the pandemic saw a drop in their volunteer participation and charitable financial gifts. Despite these challenges, these organizations were continuing their incredible efforts to meet their missions and address everything, from hunger, childcare, medical services, and racial equity to domestic abuse, mental health, shelter, and support therapy.



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TBT staff members, through their donations, fed children in summer programs, restocked health clinics with needed COVID-19 testing supplies and treatments; built beds for children in foster care; provided low-cost counseling to victims of crimes/trauma; provided transportation to get those in need to medical visits and job interviews; used funds to underwrite programming for social injustice and race relations; and, even, put together gift baskets for police officers and other first responders, just to name a few of the hands they extended.

By June 30, all \$100,000 had been allocated, with the largest share addressing the economic crisis needs, followed by financial support for health and racial equality, respectively. One quarter of the donations given addressed multiple crises with the assistance provided.

As an organization built on servant-leadership, **Texas Bank and Trust's** spirit of community has brought together individuals who share a common vision of improving the lives of their neighbors. Central to TBT's core values has been the bank's universal commitment to *inspire, involve, and empower* its people to work in service to others. In the summer of 2020, members of the TBT family were asked to bring help and healing, resilience and recovery to the communities in which they serve. In a time of unprecedented challenges, they were reminded that the call to serve would never be greater.



Pine Tree Lobby Branch Selected
House of Disciples
Longview

Financial Gift to provide services to assist individuals recovery from addiction



Gladewater Branch Selected
Union Grove ISD
Union Grove

Financial Gift to purchase supplemental school supplies and classroom resources



Credit Administration Department Selected
Partners in Prevention
"National Night Out"

Financial Gift to fund programs building partnerships between neighborhoods and local police

