

READY TO GIVE?
Profiles of Georgetown
Non-Profits that are Making
a Difference

**BROOKWOOD
IN GEORGETOWN**
A New Home
at Grace Place

ELECTION DAY
Rep. Terry Wilson
(TX-20) Explains Ballot
Amendments

WORTH THE DRIVE
Back in Time
at Bertram's Globe theater



The Giving Issue 2023



GEORGETOWN'S GENEROSITY IN ACTION

There's no Place Like Home... Grace Place!

One of the first things Michelle Meyer will talk about after meeting you is how excited she is to move into Grace Place, a new tiny home community for adults with special needs at Brookwood in Georgetown (BiG). "We're really happy for her. She's going to have a safe place when we travel," her mom Cathy says.

That peace of mind is one reason Michelle is excited to be one of the first residents at Grace Place. "My parents are worried about who will be with me when they go out of town. This is an answer to their prayers," she says. "It's so amazing living out here. I'm glad I have my own place. I'm very independent."

Kylie Gilleland, the inspiration for Grace Place, is also looking forward to a more independent lifestyle.



Bart Madeley and Emily Franz

The grand opening of Grace Place Phase 1 is Dec 3 from 1pm - 5pm at 2148 CR 120 in Georgetown and will unveil their secure and inviting black and white farmhouse-style community.

"She likes her quiet time and her space," her mom Robin says. "This village will enable her to have that social aspect, but when she wants to get away, she can have her space."

For resident Bart Madeley, Grace Place also means "a lot more independence. It means a home, a place of connection. We're having a blast over there."

VIBRANT JOURNEY

When Erin Kiltz searched for a place for her daughter Gracie, who had Down syndrome, the options for adults with special needs felt black and white, providing custodial care instead of the productive, meaningful life she wanted for Gracie. She ultimately found that in a residential and vocational community for people with special needs based in Brookshire, Texas. "The Brookwood model was beautiful, life giving, and productive. I felt like Dorothy on The Wizard of Oz after she opens her door and sees everything around her in color."

Grace Place reflects Erin's journey to finding and replicating that model in Brookwood in Georgetown—a nonprofit organization that creates meaningful jobs for adults with special needs.

One thing Erin assured was that Grace Place had homes she would want to live in herself. "I think it's important to have a beautiful place to live. I wanted them to have homes where they would be proud to invite their friends over and be able to thrive for a lifetime."

by Charlotte Kovalchuk



WHY GRACE PLACE?

Grace Place is answering the number one fear of every parent of a child with special needs - *what happens when I am gone? Where will my child live and who will care for them?* However, Grace Place will be much more than a beautiful residential community for Citizens; it will be what the café and shop are to BiG, a true destination. The vision for Grace Place includes three different lifestyle offerings for Citizens to choose to live in, plus revenue generating enterprises.

The enterprises accomplish three things: jobs for citizens, income to sustain Grace Place, and the opportunity for the community to engage with Citizens, therefore changing the way the world views this population. Some of these enterprises could include a drive-in movie theater/amphitheater, chapel, wedding venue, and pet resort where Citizens can earn a pet care license so locals can board their family pets. With 127 acres, the sky's the limit on what might evolve at Grace Place.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

"Of course, this vision is only possible and dependent upon generous funding," Erin says, "so as funding is provided, we will build. However, Grace Place always needs our wonderful volunteers." Those interested can email volunteer@bigtx.org and you can check out BiG's rolling wish-list at BrookwoodInGeorgetown.org.

citizen spotlights

AMY MICHELLE MARLEY

"My happy place" is how Amy describes her life at BiG.

Thanks to the community for adults with special needs, she has found purpose, friends, a place to belong, and soon, a house of her own at Grace Place - a new residential community BiG is opening in December. "I just love it so much," she says.



He has already started making a difference after being recruited to coach a baseball team at San Gabriel Park in the spring. "People look to Bart as a leader," BiG founder Erin Kiltz says.

MICHELLE MEYER

"It's a wonderful program and I'm glad there's something here for us," Michelle says. "We're one big family, it's amazing." Her mom Cathy has been thrilled to see her daughter blossom as a BiG citizen. "She loves this program, loves every job - the café, shop, everything. It's changed her life."



Robin appreciates the peace of mind BiG gives her. "I'm totally trusting, just so at ease and knowing that she's being taken care of well. I know she'll be here if anything happens to us, and she'll be well loved and well taken care of."

JOAN O'BRIEN VOLUNTEER, CITIZEN MOM

As a mom of twin boys, one typical and one with special needs, Joan says she has had her foot in two worlds for the last 28 years. "As a special needs parent, you're constantly told, 'This is the way the world is and somehow they've got to fit in.' At BiG, they adjust to the citizens. They're like, 'They see the world differently and react to things differently.' There's a lot of grace. "We'll be driving home and Will will say, 'Mom I love my life.'"

BART MADELEY

"What I love most about BiG is the community itself - the people that I connect with and the friends we have. It's empowered me and gave me more confidence to be me. It gives me purpose and meaning to be impacted on a daily basis and that we can impact others."

ROBIN GILLELAND VOLUNTEER, CITIZEN MOM

For an empty nester mom of three children, one with special needs, BiG has given Robin a sense of purpose. "Kylie doesn't like to miss work. I'll ask if she wants to stay home sometimes. She's like, 'No!' "

EMILY FRANZ

"I love making new friends and being able to work with my friends."

BiG Pie Company
It's Pie Time

Shop
Mon-Sat 9am-5pm

Café
Mon-Sat 8am-2:30pm

905 North Church St.
Georgetown, Tx 78626

Shop: 512-943-8430 Office: 512-688-5004
www.brookwoodingeorgetown.org