

# EPIPHANY TIDINGS

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Epiphany Ministries of Texas, Inc.  
[www.texasepiphany.com](http://www.texasepiphany.com)

## Roy's Ramblings...

Greetings to everyone. I hope y'all are well after our recent Arctic event.

You don't need me to point out that these are unprecedented times. I'm sure you have all had periods when you found yourself discouraged. I have recently been confined to the house for medical reasons (I'm fine, just impatiently recovering). Due to a recent medical procedure, playing my guitar is temporarily not one of my allowed activities. My mood lifter, playing that guitar, is unavailable to me. Therefore, I have had lots of time to sit around and be miserable.

After I had spent more than enough time feeling sorry for myself, I decided that maybe listening to music would lift my spirits. And it did. I've been doing a lot of that lately, enjoying all genres of music. One day, as I got "lost in the Rock and Roll" (Doobie Brothers - Drift Away), I could hear and even feel the confluence of Blues, Jazz, and Rock. They all combined to make something beautifully different, yet far better than each one alone could ever be.

As I thought about that, I realized that this is precisely what makes Epiphany so great - the blending of every one of our individual talents, each one's unique life experiences and perspectives. God, our Father, brings us all together as one and uses us to change lives. We become the vessel through which God works to save precious souls. That is a miracle, my friends. If that doesn't lift our spirits and sustain us through these uncertain times, I don't know what will.

Grace and Peace

Roy

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### Epiphany Events

- State Board Quarterly Meeting:  
May, 2021



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## MART'S CHRISTMAS PRAYER CHAIN, CANDY AND CARDS FOR THE YOUTH.

*Photos courtesy of TJJD staff, and Kate Mellina*



## VALENTINE'S DAY AT MART



We asked our team and Sunday school class for valentines for the 170 youth at Mart. I got a bunch and Tanya said she is getting in the mail too. And several of us bought candy. They will get more from the volunteer council.



## GARZA COUNTY PRAYER WALK: February 20, 2021

Saturday a very small group met at the facility in Post. We visited with staff who shared about the youth in the facility. We learned that the recent snow storm had left them without water. Portable toilets were being delivered while we were there. They spoke of how much they appreciate Epiphany and the difference it makes in the youth. We were asked to pray specifically for a young man who had learned that morning of the death of his 19 month old sibling. His name is Chance, and he is bi-polar, they are watching him closely. It was a little windy, but a wonderful day for a prayer walk.



KRIER:

This team didn't let COVID-19 keep them from celebrating Christmas. Looks like a good time was had by all!



December 13, 2020, Yesterday some of our Epiphany SA-Krier team were able to meet, via Zoom, for a Christmas gathering. We played a Hershey Kisses game, CHRISTmas BINGO, and had a White Elephant gift exchange. It was a tim filled with laughter & love! We also mentioned special people who were to be lifted up in prayer for various reasons. Thank you Lord for the blessing you gave us to be together in fellowship. Love you all!

De-

# ZOOM PARTIES-



# A NEW WAY TO CELEBRATE!!!

MART:

Keeping in touch!

Missed all our epiphany families that couldn't make it to our Zoom reunion.

Love to all and Merry CHRISTmas!

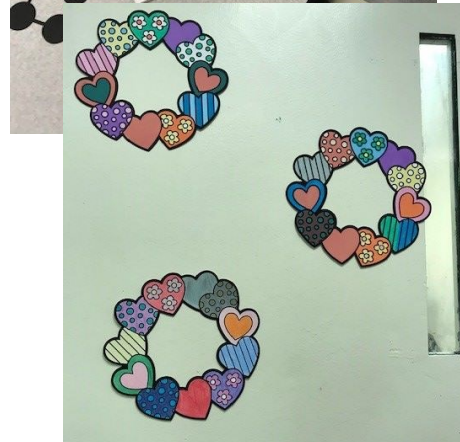


## TJJD FACEBOOK POSTS:

### Evins

One last quick look back at Valentine's Day activities – at the Evins campus in Edinburg, youth at the Redirect and Phoenix dorms enjoyed decorating their own sugar cookies and cupcakes.

Youth also created tissue paper art and colored wreaths to decorate their doorways.



## Valentine's DAY

### Ron Jackson



Just before the big winter storm turned Texas into an icebox, youth at the Ron Jackson campus celebrated a sweeter, more heartwarming February event, Valentine's Day.

The storm and the holiday were on a collision course, but Community Resource Coordinator Kevelle Bailey slipped on to campus on Sunday, Feb. 14 just ahead of what would be an historic winter shellacking.

"I wanted it to be special for them on that date, so I weathered the storm. Lol," she added in an email. "Yes, it was snowing a little but was not really bad at that time."

Each girl received donated decorated cookies and cards, and each dorm received a cookie decorating kit so the youth could design and consume their own creations.

Special thanks to devoted volunteers Claude and Anna Jackson for a donation of carnations; United Supermarket for donated roses; Midnight Cookies' Sydney Ratliff, who donated gourmet cookies; Volunteer Amy Koon, who helped arrange the cookie and rose donations; students at Howard Payne University's Delta Chi Rho sorority, who made cards, and last, but not least, the Brownwood Community Resource Council, which donated the cookie decorating kits.



# Snowpocalypse 2021

## GAINESVILLE



*Gainesville campus youth made cardboard slides and enjoyed throwing snowballs.*



*Leaving behind some snow angels.*



*The boys had coats, caps and gloves, and yet...They were happy to head back inside after a short romp in the snow.*

As we all know, last week was incredibly tough for Texas, which experienced an historic weather event with ice and sleet, unremitting cold temperatures and heavy snowfall. The extreme weather, complicated by power outages, has not been kind to any of us.

TJJD is grateful to staff members who pulled together to take care of our youth and do the best they could under difficult circumstances, and we are thankful that all of our youth and staff remained safe. Some of our staff members made long drives from one campus to another to help with staffing. Our maintenance staff worked around the clock--literally--to do

everything possible to get us through the worst of it.

As the agency worked to keep the heat on and water flowing, there were still some opportunities for snowy fun.

The youth at Gainesville had a blast playing outside, said one supervisor, as they threw snowballs, made snow angels, and went sledding. But in about ten minutes, without anyone asking, they lined up to come back inside. Staff agreed that was a good idea.

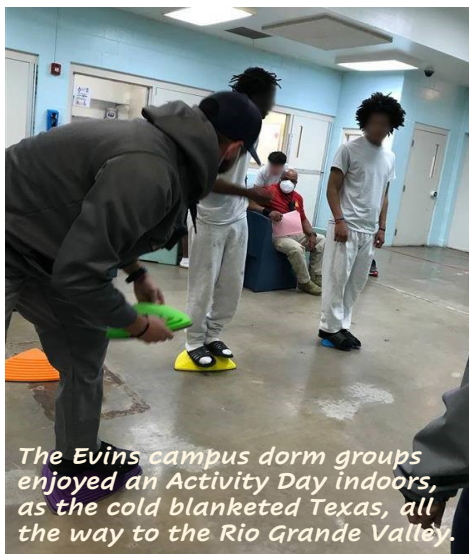
Evins Superintendent Kathryn Ellerman reported that her team came together and hosted an impromptu activity day.

Staff went around the dorms and worked on team building activities, and the youth and staff enjoyed playing Stone Cross, indoor volleyball, indoor dodgeball and karaoke.

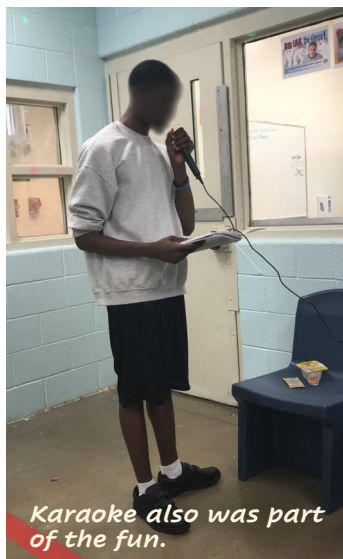
Each staff member and youth also enjoyed a Popeye's dinner that the Evins Regional Juvenile Center business office helped put together. The ERJC Employee Counsel also provided some treats for youth and staff which included candies and cupcakes.

But while all of that sounds great, an informal poll confirms that everyone is ready for spring.

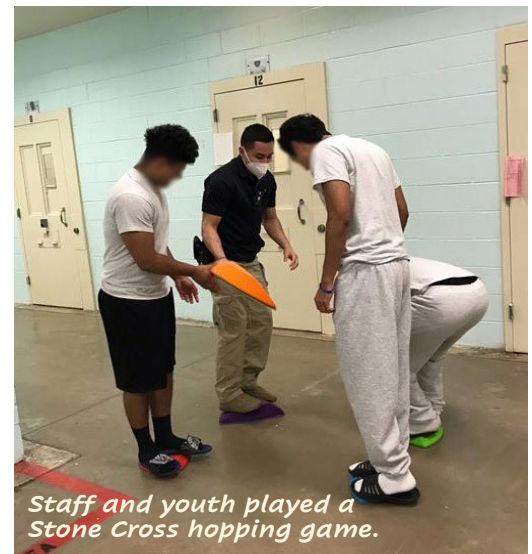
## EVINS



*The Evins campus dorm groups enjoyed an Activity Day indoors, as the cold blanketed Texas, all the way to the Rio Grande Valley.*



*Karaoke also was part of the fun.*



*Staff and youth played a Stone Cross hopping game.*

## CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEARS EVE AT GAINESVILLE - Stephen Claybrook, Community Resource Manager

# Merry Christmas

Many people and groups from the Gainesville community and beyond in North Texas helped make the recent holidays special for the youth at Gainesville State School.

We'd like to thank these groups and their members:

Student Services Council of Gainesville State School. Council President Nancy Voss and incoming 2021 President Carol Hermes and board member Charlene Ledbetter provided many hours of personal time and the entire council provided financial assistance for special holiday meals and programs on campus in celebration of Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. The SSC also provided funds to gift money to each youth's trust fund account.

Epiphany volunteers of the North Texas area. Led by Dave Casey, Lewisville Epiphany Board President and representative, the Epiphany group gave a large gift of new gray sweatshirts for each youth on campus.

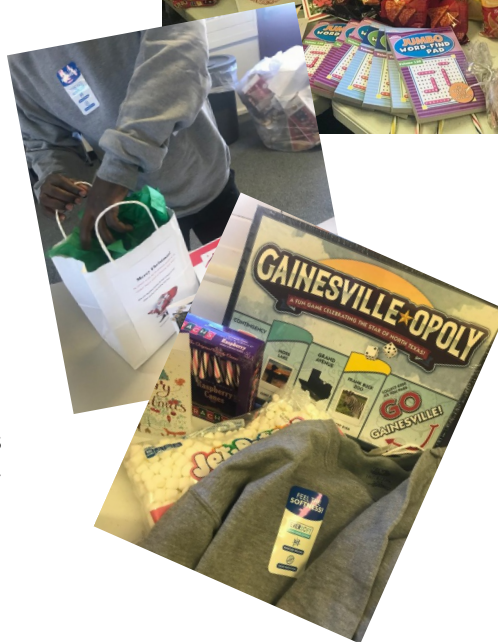
Catholic volunteers. Barbara Rohmer and other volunteers with the Catholic community support TJJD students with spiritual guidance and provided holiday items and financial assistance as Christmas gifts to the youth, who can keep money for savings and incidental expenses in trust accounts while at TJJD.

HHSC Foster Grandparents. Volunteers with this group, let by Coordinator Debra Young, provide mentoring to youth year-round and delivered handmade, personalized Christmas cards for the holiday. Young continues to bring new mentors into the program.

Texoma Council of Governments. This group provided Christmas cards to youth, an effort organized by Virginia Rhodes.

Thank you everyone! We are grateful for your enduring service and the food, cards and gifts that helped create a festive holiday season.

In this more difficult time, when social distancing is necessary, we feel blessed by the continued outreach from a caring



*Youth toast the New Year.*

*The activity called for making Vision Boards, helping everyone think about the future.*



*Youth at cereal and drank orange juice during the activity.*

## Happy New Year 2021

New Year's Day was a busy one for youth at Gainesville State School. Texas Model Mentor Rebecca Williams, Family Liaison James Anderson, master's student intern Elena Sanchez- Freeman and Community Resource Manager Stephen Claybrook held a special New Years Day even for the boys.

New Year – New Me 2021 was a huge success as each boy was served bowls of various cereals, loads of crisp fried bacon, fresh cold milk and gallons of orange juice.

"The event was designed to start the New Year out right, encouraging each of us to look forward,

not backward," Claybrook said.

Williams and her team assisted the youth in creating vision boards. Youth were encouraged to place ideas, goals, and visions for the coming year on the board and talk about their future. The entire campus participated, as well as team leads from the dorms and other Gainesville staff.

"We are so grateful for all the support," Mr. Anderson said. "Even our dorm supervisors got involved."

From the youth and staff of Gainesville State School, HAPPY NEW YEAR! 2021



## CHRISTMAS AT GIDDINGS WITH EPIPHANY!

Giddings State School students enjoyed a Christmas filled with treats and music thanks in large part to Epiphany volunteers, who gave a big donation and devised a clever, socially distanced holiday greeting.

This group of volunteers normally visits the state school at least twice a year, hosting Epiphany weekends. Members also mentor youth and visit in smaller groups for special occasions.

Those in-person events haven't been possible during the pandemic, prompting volunteers to brainstorm about ways to touch base with the boys at Giddings and let them know they're still in mind.

"We've been broken-hearted knowing they had no family or volunteers coming in," said Linda Graeter, a longtime Epiphany Ministry of Texas volunteer and spokesperson for the group serving Giddings. (Youth have been visiting with fam-

ily members and mentors via Facetime calls during the pandemic.)

So on Dec. 23, as the rest of the world made final Christmas preparations, a small group of Epiphany members gathered in the chill breeze on the wide berm outside of Giddings State School.

"We set up a sign that said 'Joy' and another sign that said, 'Santa stop here'," Graeter said.

And then, by arrangement, small groups of boys walked by, some 30 feet away but near enough to hear, on their way from school back to their dorms. Volunteer Neil Atkinson picked up his guitar and strummed Feliz Navidad.

Each dorm group passed by the serenade in success, but separately, because dorm groups have been kept together, but apart from other dorm "pods" to help curb the spread of COVID.

The volunteers, who come from Austin, Flatonia, LaGrange and Houston, addressed each student group, offering the song and words of encouragement.

"We told them, 'We can't wait to come back and see you'," Graeter said. "I think it encouraged them. We were very, very blessed to be able to do that."

Inside, later that week, the boys were treated to gifts bought with the generous \$1,000 donation from the Giddings Epiphany group.

"We purchased pizza for the youth," and crosswords, puzzles and card games for the dorms, said Giddings State School Superintendent Emily Shaw. The boys also got individual goodie bags

"The donation was appreciated by all," Shaw said. "We love to see the youth's faces light up when they get surprised!"



## CHRISTMAS AT EVINS -Fidel Garcia, Community and Volunteer Coordinator

The local community reached out to youth at Evins Regional Juvenile Center to cheer them during the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

First Baptist Church of Edinburg, Catholic Dioceses of Brownsville, Christ on The Cross (Acts Retreat Group) and Epiphany group (Jesus the Messiah) coordinated to give each youth on campus a Christmas goody bag with snacks and other stocking stuffers. The groups also deposited \$21 into each student's personal account.

Youth can use that money gift for additional phone calls to family members beyond their allotted monthly free calling time.

Pictured here is a youth enjoying a FaceTime visit with his father and showing him the gift bag that the generous volunteers from Edinburg and beyond put together.



## TJJD Response to COVID-19

As an agency focused on public safety, the highest priority of the Texas Juvenile Justice Department is to protect the youth in our care and our dedicated employees. TJJD remains in daily contact with the Office of the Governor, the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, the Texas Department of State Health Services, and the Texas Department of Emergency Management to remain fully informed and respond to events as the situation changes. Additionally, the agency's leadership team has been meeting throughout each day to ensure services while maintaining safety. The 2,000 employees of TJJD are committed to doing their part to help Texas beat COVID-19.

### Positive Youth Cases

Total number of TJJD youth who have tested positive: **322**  
 Number of positive youth cases at secure facilities: **300**  
 Number of positive youth cases at halfway houses: **22**  
 Number of COVID-19 tests administered to TJJD youth: **3,487**

### Positive Youth Cases by Facility:

Evins Regional Juvenile Center: **45**  
 Gainesville State School: **13**  
 Giddings State School: **107**  
 McLennan County State Juvenile Correctional Facility: **104**  
 Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Complex: **31**  
 Halfway Houses: **22**

### Positive Staff Cases

Total number of TJJD staff members who have tested positive: **462**  
 Number of positive staff cases at secure facilities: **418**  
 Number of positive staff cases at halfway houses: **44**

### Positive Staff Cases by Facility:

Evins Regional Juvenile Center: **92**  
 Gainesville State School: **39**  
 Giddings State School: **93**  
 McLennan County State Juvenile Correctional Facility: **108**  
 Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Complex: **86**  
 Halfway Houses: **44**

*Totals reflect positive tests for COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic.*

## Upcoming Epiphany Weekends

Facility	W/E#	Date	LD	ALD	WC	SD	B. Rep
Brownwood	E 41	Feb '21	Trish Bull				Roy Bradshaw
Ellis	E 1	TBD	Neil Atkinson	Joe Lee	Dan Swanson	Steve Wilson	Roy Bradshaw
Evins	E 11	TBD	Jef Eaton	Graciano Castaneda	Raul Rodriguez	Hamilton Musser	
Gainesville	E 41	TBD	Steve Tacker	Patty Jackson	Nichole Collingsworth	Steven Miller	
Giddings	E 35	TBD	Andrew Perry	Shirley Perry	Sharon Marks	Mike Jones	Neil Atkinson
Krier	E 28	TBD	Chrissie Smith		Mary Helen Silva		
Mart	E 32	TBD	Mike Mellina	Leeann Radell			
Post	E 26	TBD	Paula Swanson	Larae Greer	Mark Wright	E.C. Harlan	