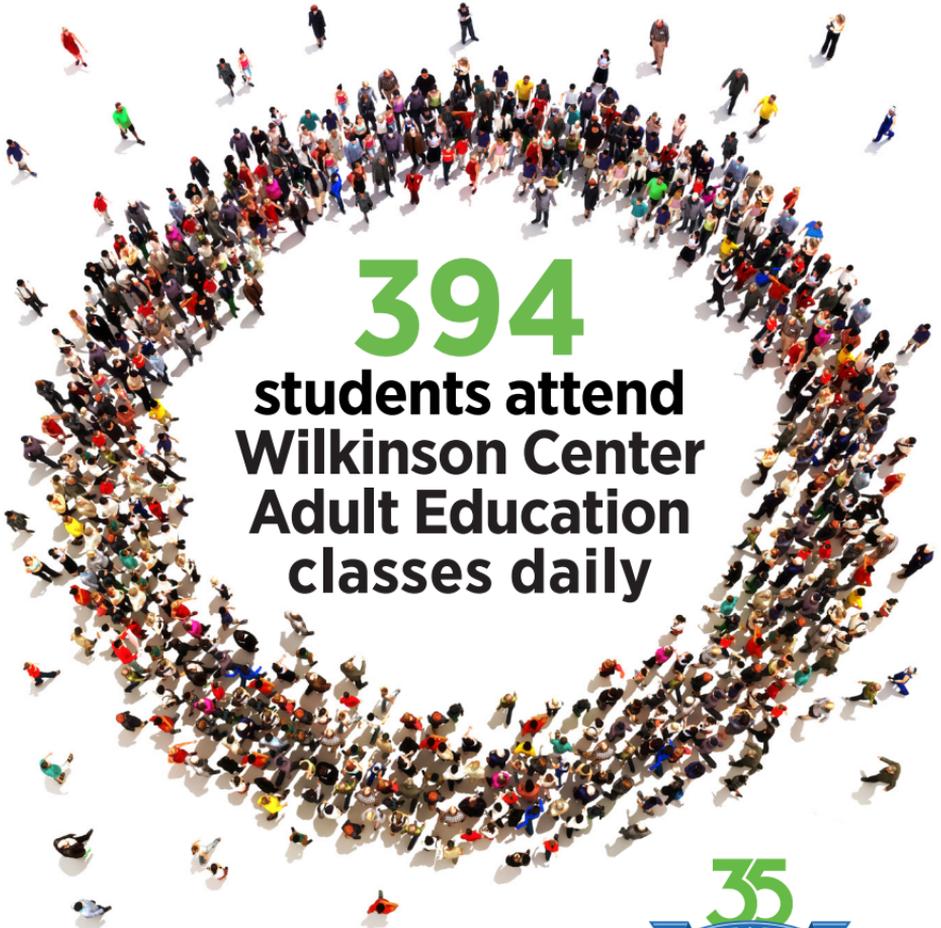


PATHWAYS

MAY 2017 NEWSLETTER

The Adult Education Issue



394

**students attend
Wilkinson Center
Adult Education
classes daily**



BACK TO SCHOOL

**YOUR
SUPPORT,
BIG IMPACT**

1,650 adult learner
lives changed*

*Projected 2016-17 reach

24 ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES DAILY • 8 DALLAS COUNTY LOCATIONS • 16 PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS
3 COMPUTER LABS • 16 CLASSROOMS

Putting More People on the Path to **Self-Sufficiency**

Sara, like one out of every four Dallas County adults, lacks a high school diploma. She also speaks very little English. No matter how hard she works, she lacks the skills for a job that provides enough income to put food on the table and pay for a safe home for her children.

There are 3.8 million Texans who, like Sara, need Adult Education services, but only 100,000 are served statewide. Thanks to your support, Wilkinson Center has doubled the size of its adult education program to put working-poor families on the path to self-sufficiency.

More than half of Wilkinson Center students take classes at our new Arcadia Park Annex location in Southwest Dallas. Hundreds of students fill Wilkinson Center classrooms morning, noon and night to learn English, work on High School Equivalency diplomas and gain computer skills. And, students take community college classes on site, including a BOSS certification course to prepare for business and administrative jobs. Equipped with these skills, students can transition to college-level courses, employment and jobs that improve their standard of living.



Wilkinson Center and Dallas County Community College partner at Arcadia Park Annex in Southwest Dallas – a joint effort on behalf of Texas Workforce Commission.

Adult Education at Wilkinson Center

Why It Works

We all understand wanting to care for one's family and striving to get ahead in life. Maybe you've even gone back to school to build skills for a better job.

But, imagine if you can't get to class because you can't pay the bus fare or a babysitter to watch your kids. Or worse, you can't concentrate on your studies because you haven't had a full meal today or are worried about being behind on the rent again.

These are the realities that thousands of Dallas County working poor families live with every day. To successfully address our city's overwhelming poverty issues, we must address the many barriers that stop people from achieving long-term success.

That's why, at Wilkinson Center, we use the Working Families Success Model – a proven approach of bundling services essential to achieve and sustain financial and career goals.

“The goal is to help families not only achieve stability but to ultimately thrive financially. Financially stable families invest in our communities, building a strong future for all.”

Wende Burton, Communities Foundation of Texas

To help people rise above poverty, Wilkinson Center addresses the complex, intertwined challenges they face.

EDUCATION & JOB SKILLS

High School Equivalency
English language classes
Computer literacy
Workforce preparation
Job search/retention coaching
Post-secondary education



Working Families Success Model*



URGENT NEEDS

Food
Childcare
Transportation
Rent/utility assistance
Benefit screening/referrals



FINANCIAL EDUCATION

Budgeting
Savings
Debt reduction
Financial literacy
Financial coaching

Restoring Hope

How Monique is Building a New Future

When Monique moved to Dallas, she hoped to leave behind the anxieties of living in the troubled Heart of Chicago neighborhood. She longed to put her high school diploma to work and make a better life for herself and her son. But, she discovered the school she attended was not accredited. Without a high school diploma or livable income, she was soon homeless and swirling into a depression.

One day, she turned to Wilkinson Center's Food Pantry for assistance. She told our team about her struggles, and they connected her not only with food, but also with our GED program, a licensed counselor and other services to remove barriers in her way.

Equipped with these tools, Monique has been faithfully building a new life, earning her diploma in just five months and working steadily with a financial coach. She applied for and was awarded a scholarship to attend community college, and she is now pursuing her dream of being a surgical technician.

**On May 9, Wilkinson Center
recognized Monique for
her grit and determination
at the annual Can Do!
Luncheon.**



Celebrating Entrepreneurship in Philanthropy

2017 Can Do! Luncheon Honorees

Ashlee & Chris Kleinert

This big-hearted couple energetically supports a range of worthy causes in Dallas, including education, community health, victims of human trafficking, and women and girls. They can be found heading major campaigns, chairing boards and delivering “Random Snacks of Kindness” through Ruthie’s Rolling Cafe – Ashlee’s gourmet grilled cheese food truck business with a charitable bent.

Known for their philanthropic ingenuity, the Kleinerts founded Executives in Action (EIA) in response to the 2008 financial crisis. EIA put executives who were between jobs to work providing much-needed, pro-bono consulting to nonprofits in short-term, high-impact projects. Wilkinson Center benefited from one of these valuable engagements in 2016 as EIA expanded its reach and merged with the national skills-based volunteer platform Catchafire.org. EIA has advanced missions throughout the North Texas nonprofit community, impacting more than 275 nonprofits with over \$5.2 million in human resource capital.





THE REAL ESTATE COUNCIL
FOUNDATION

The Real Estate Council

The Real Estate Council's 2,000-plus members are developers, builders, brokers, architects and other commercial real estate professionals. But they are also dedicated community servants who wield their influence, resources and expertise to do good works in four areas: education, housing, job creation and the environment.

Since 1994, TREC has contributed nearly \$10 million in grant funds to more than 100 nonprofit community organizations, supported by professional services valued at more than \$750,000 annually. TREC's imprint can be found on community initiatives as broad-ranging as early learning centers, emergency shelters, food pantries and community legal clinics – as well as Wilkinson Center's GED Testing Center, which opened in 2016 thanks to support from TREC.

Born from Compassion

Wilkinson Center Celebrates 35 Years

Pathways to self-sufficiency. This has been at the core of Wilkinson Center's mission since it was founded in 1982 at Munger Place United Methodist Church. Fellow East Dallas neighbors were going hungry right in the church's backyard, and, in response, the Food Pantry was born.

Today Wilkinson Center is an independent nonprofit, and we are still feeding our neighbors, now in locations across Dallas. Thanks to the caring and generous support of people like you, we have significantly expanded our services to help families build pathways out of poverty for good, using a formula of Food+Education+Jobs. In addition to Emergency Services like food and rent assistance, we also provide life-changing Adult Education, Employment and Financial Coaching services.

Our greatest hope would be to someday work ourselves out of a job. But, as Mayor Rawlings has said, "Dallas is the poorest rich city in the United States," with poverty growing and spreading into surrounding suburbs. With your help, Wilkinson Center will be here for the long haul to take that problem head on, with compassion, one family at a time.



Anne Reeder

Executive Director, Wilkinson Center



OUR HISTORY AT WILKINSON CENTER

Rev. Clayton Lewis founds
Munger Place Church
Food Pantry

1982

First Carlin Morris
Shoe Drive provides
550 pairs of back-to-
school shoes and socks

1986



Adult education classes
begin at Eastfield
College in Pleasant Grove

2009



Participated in
Working Families Success
Cohort at Communities
Foundation of Texas

2014

Named a Texas Workforce
Commission Adult
Education & Learning
Provider in Dallas County

2014

1985 Name changed to honor
the Wilkinson family's gift
in honor of longtime
volunteer, Ruby Wilkinson



1997 Wilkinson Center
becomes independent
nonprofit organization

2009 Named flagship
agency by North Texas
Food Bank



2012 Received grant from
the United Way of
Metropolitan Dallas for our
Adult Education Center



2016 GED Testing Center opens

Volunteer of the Year: Michael Graska



Michael with his wife, Kristen Graska, who is Co-Chair for the Young Friends of Wilkinson Center

Volunteering at Wilkinson Center takes many forms – GED tutors, Food Pantry assistants, event committee members and more. But, at Wilkinson Center, there is only one Michael Graska.

For the last six years, Michael has served as Communications Chair, spending countless hours helping Wilkinson Center spread the word about its mission. He generously designs and codes, and his company hosts, the Wilkinson Center website on a pro bono basis. In addition, he helps with various collateral materials and faithfully supports Young Friends of Wilkinson Center events. We appreciate his sincere caring and devotion to the Wilkinson Center mission and his valuable professional skills!

Volunteer Opportunities

Be The Difference

31ST ANNUAL CARLIN MORRIS SHOE DRIVE July 29 – 31

Help children register and shop for back-to-school shoes at a local Payless

BACKPACK DISTRIBUTION August dates TBA

Sort and distribute school backpacks to families and their children

Location: Wilkinson Center Family Education Center

3302 N. Buckner Blvd., Dallas

FOOD PANTRY Every weekday, various hours 9 AM – 4 PM

Help families shop for food and restock shelves in the pantry

Location: Wilkinson Center Food Pantry

3402 N. Buckner Blvd., Dallas

TUTORING Monday – Thursday, day and evening sessions

Help GED students earn their diplomas by tutoring in language arts and math

Location: Adult Education sites in Dallas, DeSoto, Mesquite and

Pleasant Grove

To learn more, contact:

Bob Munro, Community Outreach

(972) 284-0301

Bob_Munro@WilkinsonCenter.org



Be a Friend!

Looking for a way to get involved? Joining one of these dedicated volunteer groups is a fun way to make an impact with people who share a desire to make a difference. They serve at the Food Pantry, volunteer during our Back-To-School and Holiday drives and put on some of the best events in the city – all to benefit Wilkinson Center.

Interested?

Visit WilkinsonCenter.org and click on “Get Involved”

Mark Your Calendar

WHITE PARTY

Presented by Young Friends of Wilkinson Center

Friends, cocktails and a party with purpose!



Saturday, June 10

9 PM to 2 AM

Saint Ann Restaurant & Bar, Dallas

21 and over event

Tickets are \$100 per person. Sponsorships start at \$2,000.

Tables start at \$1,500. **Available at WhiteParty.info**

Our Heartfelt Thanks

YOU make the work of Wilkinson Center possible. There are countless friends and volunteers who support our mission. Here are just a few of the heroes in our midst.

HELPING ADULT STUDENTS & JOB SEEKERS

- » **Stemmons Foundation** for new computers for Adult Education students
- » **Jeremy Zidell** and **Supercuts** for contributing haircuts for students and job seekers
- » **Ridgewood Park UMC** and **Kessler Park UMC** for hosting beautiful graduation ceremonies
- » **White Rock UMC** for sending 35 hard-working volunteers for the clean-up project at Arcadia Park Annex

SUPPORTING THE FOOD PANTRY

- » **Wells Fargo** for sending volunteers monthly
- » **AAA** for donating more than 5,000 cans of food
- » **Wilshire Baptist Church** for funding new freezers for the Food Pantry
- » **Bishop Lynch** for sending students to volunteer each school day
- » Food Pantry Champions: **AAA** (January), **Bishop Dunne** (February), **Ridgewood Park** (March), **Northwood Women's Club** (April), **Wilshire Baptist Church** (May)

LENDING A HAND

- » **Senior Source's RSVP Program** for stuffing numerous mailings
- » **Herbalife** for supplying amazing volunteers for every Wilkinson Center event and every week at the Food Pantry
- » **Deloitte** for donating 40 hours of consulting for our agency
- » **Young Friends** who volunteered for Modern Luxury Dallas' Fresh Faces of Fashion
- » **Soul Cycle** for holding a charity ride in March to benefit Wilkinson Center

SUPPORTING THE CAUSE

- » **Liberty Burger, CPK Preston Center** and **The Lot** for taking part in Dine Around Dallas
- » **"A Friend"** and **Anonymous** donor for making our 2016 year-end

SPREADING THE WORD

- » **Modern Luxury** for being our media sponsor for the 2016 White Party and choosing us as the beneficiary for Fresh Faces of Fashion
- » **PaperCity** for being our 2016 media sponsor for the Can Do! Luncheon and Spirit of Taos
- » **Michael Graska** and **Identity Media Services** for managing and hosting our website
- » **Aimee Sheahan of Sheahan Communications** and **Valentine Direct** for donating services to our year-end campaign

2017 CAN DO! LUNCHEON

- » **Beth Thoele** for her leadership and hard work chairing the 2017 Luncheon
- » **Kristi Francis** for her tireless work as Underwriting Chair
- » **Tootsies** for hosting the Can Do! Kick-Off Party and **Jan Worrall** for underwriting catering for the event

(Continued on p. 18)

Our Heartfelt Thanks

Continued

» **Mr. and Mrs. Larry Helm** for hosting the Sponsor Party at their home

2016 SPIRIT OF TAOS

- » **Sloan Looney Dix, Stephanie Taylor, Meridith Zidell, Missy Huber, Babo Crain and Anthony Contreras** for a record-breaking Spirit of Taos event
- » **Melissa Benge** for hosting the Spirit of Taos Kick-Off Party
- » **The Ginger Murchison Foundation** for the generous matching gift for Spirit of Taos Gifts of Love

2016 HOLIDAY DRIVES

- » **Friends, Young Friends, Wilshire Baptist Church, Rockwall UMC and Sammons** for donating turkey baskets

- » **HPUMC, Herbalife, Wilshire Baptist Church, Commercial Finance Association—Southwest Chapter, Friends and Young Friends** for donating toys
- » **West Coast Vibes and Herbalife** for hosting “kids parties” so parents could shop for toys
- » **Bank of America and Bishop Dunne** for volunteering during the toy distribution
- » **RE/MAX Lakewood** for donating 106 bikes and **Pick Up** for transporting them

2016 BACK TO SCHOOL DRIVES

- » **Carlin Morris** for organizing the Shoe Drive for 30 years
- » **Prudential and Highland Park UMC** for donating backpacks

5 Ways You Can GET INVOLVED

#1

VOLUNTEER

There's something for everyone – from tutoring, to stocking food pantry shelves, to helping with one of our fundraisers.

#2

GIVE

Gifts of every size are important to making our mission possible. You can also sponsor and attend one of our upcoming events.

#3

BE A FRIEND

Join one of our dynamic service groups – the Friends of Wilkinson Center or the Young Friends of Wilkinson Center.

#4

DONATE

Donations of food, back-to-school items and holiday toys are among the ways you can help working poor families.

#5

SPREAD THE WORD

Tell your friends about our mission. It's easy to connect with us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



Follow us at WilkinsonCenter

WilkinsonCenter.org



PATHWAYS OUT OF POVERTY

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