

# STREETZine

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## Dallas ISD Prepares for the Upcoming School Year

By Nicole Kiser

In Texas, August traditionally marks the winding down of the summer and the beginning of a new school year. However, like many other things, COVID-19 has caused this school year to look radically differently.

While some school districts are beginning to return to school, many are beginning their lessons virtually for the first few weeks. As COVID-19 cases continue to rise in Dallas, the Dallas Independent School District (DISD), under the recommendation of local health officials, initially pushed back its normal start date until after Labor Day.

Then, on August 20, the district decided to delay in-person classes until at least early October. "What we'd like to do is go month to month," said Superintendent Michael Hinojosa.

The August 20 decision drew praise from Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins. On Twitter, Jenkins said "By heeding the recommendation of the public health experts, [DISD] protects our greatest asset – our children – and those who serve them."

The idea of reopening in-person shortly after Labor Day had been controversial. Before DISD's board briefing on August 13, a large group of Dallas ISD educators — coordinated through their teacher organiza-

tion, Alliance-AFT — protested at the site. Rena Honea, the Alliance-AFT president, said she wanted the board to consider not reopening campuses until at least 2021.

Reopening has been questioned by parents as well. The daily case numbers have offered parents little comfort, as Dallas, Collin and Tarrant counties reported high numbers of new cases, citing previously reported old cases for the large increases. At least five school districts in North Texas have had staff test positive in the last month — Frisco ISD, Mansfield ISD, Wiley ISD, Keene ISD and Carroll ISD — and Frisco ISD has had students at least three high schools test positive.

The Texas Education Agency and the Texas Department of State Health Services decided in late August that they will collect COVID-19 case data from schools and provide it to the public. According to the Dallas Morning News, they also will collect data about children and employees at licensed child care facilities, school-age programs and pre-school and after-school programs.

With all of the current uncertainty and opacity on how the pandemic will be handled, many parents don't trust schools to watch their children as carefully as they would themselves to ensure proper social distancing,

hand cleanliness and mask usage. But many parents face little choice. Dallas is one of the 25 largest cities in the United States with the worst broadband connections. According to DISD's own survey, 30% — or 46,000 students — don't have reliable internet access at home, making virtual learning nearly impossible. To help bridge the technological gap, the district distributed over 15,000 hotspots and announced a \$20 million investment to distribute iPads or Chromebooks to students prior to the school year.

***The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed how many services Dallas ISD provides beyond the reach of education.***

In mid-August, Dallas ISD trustees voted to place a \$3.7 billion bond package on the ballot in November. If approved, it will be the largest issuance of debt from any local entity in state history. The bond included \$270 million for technology improvements, including helping to provide broadband access to students.

Even with the work Dallas ISD has put into accommodating its students, for some parents, in-person learning seems like the only option. Those who can't work from home and can't afford childcare are relying on the school district to safely care for their

children while they support their family. Some rely on compassionate family members or their children's older siblings for childcare. Many parents have been rearranging their schedules or even bringing their children to work with them to accommodate virtual learning.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed how many services Dallas ISD provides beyond the reach of education. Dallas ISD has become a provider of basic utilities, including internet and technology. Since March, Dallas ISD has provided food services weekly to eligible families with some staff members buying groceries with their own money to help support students.

With high numbers of COVID-19 cases in Dallas and no great options for parents and teachers, the district's reopening plans give Dallas ISD the ability to continue to provide for and adapt to the community's needs as it receives updated information from parents, teachers and local health officials.

Nicole Kiser is managing editor of STREETZine.

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WHAT SHOULD WE COVER NEXT? FILL OUT OUR SURVEY AT:  
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# STREETZine

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THE STEWPOT

The STREETZine is a monthly newspaper published by The Stewpot, a ministry of the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas. The Stewpot provides services and resources for people experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of being homeless. The organization also offers opportunities for a new life.

As part of this ministry, the STREETZine seeks to raise awareness about the issues surrounding homelessness and poverty. At the same time, the monthly publication offers financial opportunity for homeless clients who sell the paper to Dallas residents. Vendors are able to move towards economic self-sufficiency by using the money they receive from selling copies to purchase bus passes, food, and necessary living expenses. Clients also receive stipends for contributing articles to STREETZine.

The content in STREETZine does not necessarily reflect the views or endorsement of its publisher, editors, contributors, sponsors, or advertisers. To learn more about this publication, contact Suzanne Erickson, Director of Educational and Workforce Programs, 1835 Young Street, Dallas, Texas 75201 or [Suzanne@thestewpot.org](mailto:Suzanne@thestewpot.org). And to read more about STREETZine, a member of the International Network of Street Papers, go to [www.thestewpot.org/streetzine](http://www.thestewpot.org/streetzine).

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## A Letter from the Executive Director

By Brenda Snitzer

For many of us, talk about “back-to-school” probably brings back fond memories of school supply shopping, thinking about new teachers and classmates and enjoying a fresh start at grades. For this year, none of these things come to mind for students, teachers or parents.

Every scenario being discussed, whether complete virtual learning, virtual learning for a month or so before returning to the classroom or staggered schedules, does not give comfort to parents, teachers or children. COVID-19 has made “back-to-school” a very upsetting time for everyone.

The Stewpot is known for helping those experiencing homelessness. However, for more than 45 years, we also have had programming for low-income children, youth and families. This is normally our “back-to-school” time of year as well.

But this year, the biggest challenge for many of our families is that their jobs do not allow them to work from home, where they can assist their children’s virtual education. Many of their jobs require them to be on-site to earn a paycheck.

As a result, whether the family is a single-head of household or a dual-head of household, parents must choose between leaving their children home alone or staying with them and not earning an income. Some have already made the latter choice and have been struggling for months to pay rent and utilities with a non-existent income.

The Stewpot, like many organizations around the city, have been helping families pay their rent and utilities. But the pandemic continues, and dollars are dwindling, not only for families but also for organizations that are helping pay rent and utilities, including the City of Dallas.

Many families were looking to the school year to help get them back on their feet. But they, like families of all income levels, are having to make tough choices about their children’s education.

On top of that, children and youth who are not engaged in summer activities experience a dramatic summer-learning loss. Research from organizations like the **Wallace Foundation** and **Big Thought** shows that children and youth need to be engaged in activities throughout the summer. Both educational and recreational activities during summer months, such as field-trips that stimulate their minds, help them maintain important skills in subjects like read-



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ing and math.

This reality is particularly challenging for children from lower-income families. As this school year starts, many of them may have suffered academic loss from the end of the last school year as well as from a lack of summer stimulation. And their families are the least likely to have the technological connections to continue learning in a virtual environment.

What’s more, education for many lower-income families is their main way out of poverty. As one example, The Stewpot’s children and youth programs have helped more than 200 young people go onto college or vocational school after high school, enabling them to secure higher-paying employment as they enter adulthood. Many of these young people later help lift their families out of poverty.

There are other excellent after-school and summer programs, such as ones offered by Girls Inc. and Boys and Girls Clubs. These programs are supporting families during this time and will continue to do so.

We all hope that we haven’t lost too much ground as we work to help young people grow academically. But we will continue to support their growth through our programs. The COVID-19 crisis we all are experiencing makes it even more critical that our most impoverished families are supported so all of our children can grow academically.

Brenda Snitzer is executive director of The Stewpot.

# The Pastor's Letter

By The Rev. Amos Disasa

*This essay is adapted from a sermon Rev. Disasa gave on August 9.*

When I was young, my grandmother scolded me every time I exclaimed that I hated something. My grandmother's unqualified demand that I never use the word "hate" to describe my feelings towards a person, place or thing is unforgettable. I heard her voice whispering to me and Joseph's brothers as I studied their family saga from Genesis 37.

The hate started early for Joseph. He was 17 years old when the Bible says that his father "...loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him."

The rest of Joseph's story is predictable. Brotherly jealousy has a way of leading to negative outcomes for everybody. And this story of a band of brothers that breaks up in spectacular fashion is no different. Joseph's privileged place in his father's heart is undeniable. He will wear the shiny fresh coat given to him by his father with pride, but Joseph's brothers are not impressed.

Lost love between brothers is a common theme in Genesis. We've already seen it in the Cain and Abel story and then in the Jacob and Esau story. The hyper-local jealousies, resentments and selfishness of siblings never seems to stop at one of them being put in time-out. Instead, the arguments over birthrights, blessings and blingy coats become geo-political rivalries that are inherited by generation after generation. Scripture keeps telling us that the consequences of some sin aren't buried with our bodies. They are passed down like our bald spots.

The older brothers don't know it yet, but Joseph is not their enemy. Joseph is a young dreamer that has the eye of his father and a fancy coat. He'll preen and peacock his way through the next 20 verses of this chapter, an-

noying us and his brothers with his breathless narration of self-congratulatory dreams. His brothers hate him so much that they sell him into slavery to a caravan of foreigners on their way to Egypt. The punishment was cruel and unnecessary. Couldn't they find a less calamitous way to resolve their hate?

They can't. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him. The fate of all 12 brothers, including Joseph, was sealed when the older brothers saw how much their father loved Joseph, and hated Joseph in response.

Hate is a zero-sum emotion. The result is always mutual self-destruction. Nobody wins in this generation or the next. Which means, Joseph is not his brother's enemy, hate is.

Researchers report that we are most likely to hate those we love or once loved. And it has been reported that we hate, on average, five people in our lifetimes; ex-husbands and co-workers are cited as the most hated people in psychological studies.

Hate doesn't come naturally or often to us, but when it comes on, there isn't an easy way to slow it down. But if you think you're immune to experiencing the emotion, then consider if you've ever attempted to eliminate someone from your circle of friends, from membership in a group you support or from your memory.

Most of us wouldn't admit to hating someone enough to throw them into a pit or sell them into slavery like Joseph's brothers did to him. But we are prone to making attempts at eliminating people in other ways. Joseph's brothers could have killed him, but instead they choose to make his life intolerable by erasing him from their family story.

They don't want him to die; they just don't want him to live anymore with his shiny new coat.

Stripped-bare Jesus the Christ was lifted high above another band of brothers. The Roman soldiers below him were bartering for his coat and fighting over his sandals. What did they care?

**Hate is a zero-sum emotion. The result is always mutual self-destruction. Nobody wins in this generation or the next. Which means, Joseph is not his brother's enemy, hate is.**

He was too weak to fight back. Perfect in love, he used his last breath to forgive those who cursed him to death. Innocent as a dove, he bore the stains of all humanity on his shiny coat of righteousness as he died for no reason. They wanted to eliminate Jesus by sending him to a certain death. Jesus' punishers at

tempted to demonstrate that the first wouldn't be last and the last couldn't be first because the world isn't supposed to give shiny coats to less than perfect people.

But God can't help it. In the kingdom of God, even brats like Joseph get a coat.

My prayer for us is that we'd notice the shiny coat of possibility that each of us wears as a child of God. Keep reading Joseph's story and you'll notice that when we strip the dignity from people we hate, God keeps them clothed with a coat of divinity.

*The Rev. Amos Disasa is senior pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas.*

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# A Test of Resolve: Back to School in the Pandemic

By Poppy Sundeen

Preparing for her fall semester at Texas A&M University is different this year. In addition to typical student jitters about upcoming courses, Jenny Patino worries about her safety from COVID-19. Weekly three-hour engineering labs are a major concern. "Last year, multiple labs met at the same time, so it was really full," she says. "I don't know how they're going to keep us distanced in the fall."

Despite her concerns, Jenny, a rising junior, is determined to keep working toward her degree in electrical engineering. It's a journey that began in first grade, when she started spending Saturdays at The Stewpot.

## Growing up with The Stewpot

"My mom learned about the Saturday school because we had some cousins who went there," says Jenny, referencing a Stewpot program called Saturday Kids' Club. "We'd have art class, gym, theatre plus a field trip once a month. I ended up meeting some of my best friends there."

After elementary school, Jenny transitioned into The Stewpot's Junior Crew program for middle school students. "Two of the adults who worked with us were engineers. I didn't know what engineering even was, but they explained what they did."

When it was time for high school, she chose to attend the School of Science and Engineering, a Dallas Independent School District Magnet cam-



Jenny Patino grew up attending the Children and Youth programs at The Stewpot.

pus. "It's one of the best decisions I ever made," says Jenny. "The teachers there really stressed going to college. They make it part of your mindset."

## A pathway to college

The Stewpot continued to play an important role in Jenny's life through the Venturing Crew program for high school students. She credits the program with introducing her family to the college experience.

"When my oldest brother was in high school, he went on a Venturing Crew college trip to Austin and ended up going to school there. It's how he found out what college was all about, and my parents learned from there."

Jenny's brother was the first person in her immediate family to attend college. Her parents, who immigrated from Mexico before she was born, left school as children. After they settled in Texas, Jenny's mother got her GED. "Neither of my parents knew about college until my brother went."

***"When my oldest brother was in high school, he went on a Venturing Crew college trip to Austin and ended up going to school there. It's how he found out what college was all about, and my parents learned from there."***

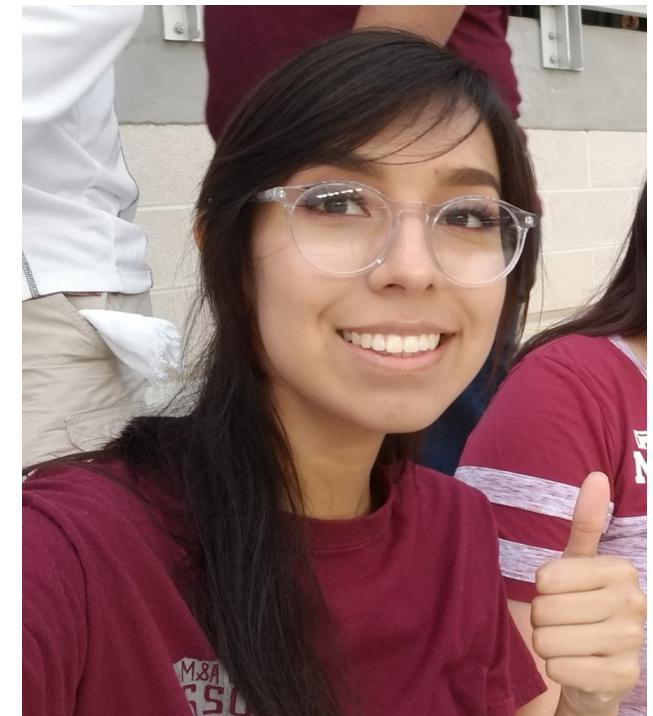
## To Texas A&M on scholarship

Encouraged by her brother's example, as well as by her school and the Venturing Crew, Jenny set her sights on a college education. Her work paid off with acceptance at Texas A&M plus a scholarship from The Stewpot.

Jenny thrived at college, immersing herself in her classes and making new friends. "You meet people who are on the same journey you are." She was excited about A&M's study-abroad program and about joining the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers. "They have speakers, and you can ask anybody for help." She was also hoping to go to their next national convention.

## Spring 2020, when everything changed

The COVID-19 pandemic put an end to many of the college experiences Jenny valued most. After spring break, the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers ceased hosting meetings in person. "They tried doing Zoom meetings, but fewer and



Jenny Patino received a scholarship from The Stewpot to attend Texas A&M University.

fewer people attended." Its convention plans were put on hold, as were the A&M study-abroad programs.

Jenny stayed in College Station and completed her sophomore year online before returning home to Dallas to live with her parents. Over the summer, she continued to work toward her degree by taking a class in linear algebra and a circuitry lab online. "The lab involved parts I would have had access to at A&M, but I had to buy them to do it online."

The hands-on nature of lab classes is another reason why they typically take place in person and present social-distancing challenges. Jenny expects lecture courses to be less crowded. "I really don't know how it's going to work."

## Looking ahead

What Jenny does know is that she wants to finish her undergrad degree and possibly go on to graduate studies. "I'd like to lean into the medical area," she says. "Maybe use electrical engineering to help make more efficient MRIs and ultrasound machines or ventilators."

For now, Jenny's focused on doing well in her classes this semester and staying virus-free. "I hope that every single time I go to class, I come in healthy and leave healthy."

She's trying to adjust to doing without the campus interactions that made her first two years at A&M so rewarding — the study groups, her professional meetings and shared campus activities. "It'll be lonelier in college this year."

Poppy Sundeen, a Dallas writer, is a member of the STREETZine Editorial Advisory Board.

# View from the Street: Elm Street through the Eyes of a STREETZine Vendor

By Sarah Disasa

In mid-March of this year, the bustling streets of downtown Dallas began looking like the deserted streets of a ghost town. Many of the men and women who fill the tall buildings downtown, run the restaurants, keep the church houses open, sell merchandise at Neiman Marcus and wait on hotel guests, were not coming downtown to their jobs anymore due to COVID-19. Stay-at-home orders made normal day-to-day jobs feel foreign in many ways.

No longer did we have the camaraderie of the workplace. No longer did we get “dressed” for work. No longer did we commute in stressful traffic or on the DART. And although it seemed strange not to go in to work, many people could simply work from home. But for those who don’t have a home, those whose jobs can’t be done from home and those who rely on a vibrant city to make ends meet, the stay-at-home orders had a significant impact.

Brandon has sold STREETZine on Elm Street daily for the past two-and-a-half years. But ever since mid-March, his customers, the people who fill up downtown Dallas, stopped coming to work. No workers downtown meant no customers for Brandon. Yet, he continues to go to his post on Elm Street even now, even without a newspaper to sell. Not only did his customers stop coming downtown for work, but print production of STREETZine

stopped temporarily in April.

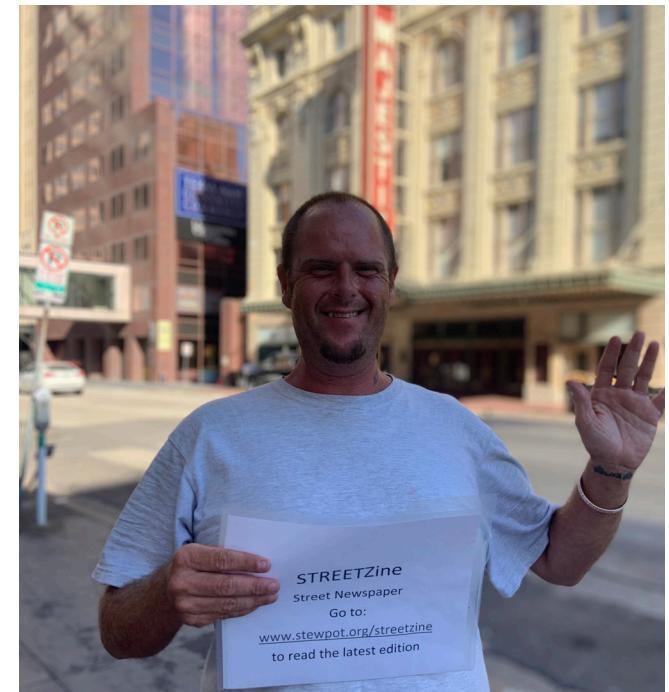
Brandon was born in Rowlett and has been experiencing homelessness ever since his move to Dallas five years ago. Previously having jobs as a cook and as a builder of cable towers, Brandon now has one job that he really enjoys: selling STREETZine. “My dad always had his own business, and I like to work for myself,” he said, as he recalled what he likes about selling STREETZine. “I absolutely love it.” Before COVID-19, Brandon typically worked over 40 hours a week.

Over the past two-and-a-half years, Brandon has made some wonderful relationships with his STREETZine customers. “You get to meet a lot of new people. And then you have a reoccurring relationship with some of those people. That gets to be fun. They get to be your friends.” On his birthday recently, several of Brandon’s regular customers brought him gift cards to celebrate. “I’ve got really good customers,” he said.

## ***We want to earn a living like everybody else.***

STREETZine has continued with online production rather than print production for the past several issues due to the current circumstances of the pandemic. The Stewpot is just as eager as the vendors are to resume selling STREETZine in its original printed form. Without a printed product, STREETZine’s purpose of offering financial opportunity to the vendors is on pause. In the meantime, The Stewpot has set up a fund to help with groceries and other basic necessities for established vendors.

Although his job as a STREETZine vendor is very



**Brandon in front of the Majestic Theater.  
Photo by Sarah Disasa.**

flexible, Brandon likes to keep regular hours because his customers rely on him to be there. “I want STREETZine to come back because customers look forward to it.”

Now that the bustle of downtown Dallas has picked back up, Brandon and other vendors are eager to sell. “STREETZine has helped me in a big way,” he said. “It’s helping me get off the streets. My life’s a lot more positive now. It keeps me out of trouble.” Brandon explained that the vendors are good people. “We want to earn a living like everybody else.”

*Sarah Disasa is a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas and the STREETZine Editorial Advisory Board.*



**Did You Know?**

The Stewpot offers scholarships to students in college or vocational school.

Currently, 46 students are receiving higher education with the help of these scholarships.



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**Did You Know?**

The Stewpot has served over 8,200,000 meals since 1975.

Over 200,000 meals have been served this year alone!

# The Power of Accelerated Growth: A Conversation with Romikianta Sneed

By Bill McKenzie

*Romikianta Sneed is principal of the Dallas Independent School District's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Arts Academy. Her pre-K through fifth grade campus is part of the district's Accelerating Campus Excellence (ACE) program, which uses such strategies as matching high-performing teachers with the lowest-performing campuses.*

*Located in an economically-challenged southern Dallas neighborhood, 20-25 percent of the school's students regularly experience homelessness. Ms. Sneed spoke with STREETZine's Suzanne Erickson,*

*Nicole Kiser, and Bill McKenzie about their challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic and the start of the school year. The interview below has been edited for length and clarity.*

**Before we get into this coming school year, what it was like for your students who experience homelessness after Dallas schools went into lockdown in March? How did they gain access to the internet, for example?**

Immediately, I reached out to the parents at the three shelters where our students experiencing homelessness live to let them know we would be glad to bring the technology and hotspots there for their children. Thanks to the district, they had Chromebooks, Kindles and the technologies everyone else had.

But three or four weeks later, one of the shelters, Dallas Life, had an outbreak of COVID-19. That was very hard for everyone. We lost contact with some of our scholars there.

**What was it like in terms of food and meals for those students as well as others experiencing poverty?**

The assistant principals and I went to Costco and

**We are not just about academics. We truly care about educating the whole child. We provide a holistic approach to breaking the cycle of poverty, starting with meeting the most basic need of having enough to eat.**

Sam's and purchased food out of our pockets for our families. When families picked up the school packets and technologies for their students, they also could pick up groceries.

We reached out to CitySquare, who also provided food for MLK students as well as all of South Dallas. Some families, though, went through their food in a few days. CitySquare filled in the gap.

CitySquare and Cornerstone Baptist Church also found housing for families in hotels and apartments. They paid to put up families, some of whom were not documented. I know people were not supposed to be evicted, but some of our families are undocumented and are taken advantage of during crisis situations. CitySquare reached out to help them.

**As you enter the new school year, how do you plan to assess any learning deficits that might have arisen from the end of the 2019-2020 school year?**

Our district has disaggregated some of our data, so we are looking at what we are calling unfinished learning, on-track learning and advanced learning. We are looking at all students, but particularly those in grades two through five who took an interim assessment before the shutdown. Our culture at MLK is built upon high expectations.

We will start virtually and in phases. The initial phase during the first four weeks is to ensure teachers and students are doing well and can navigate all the technologies and online resources.

Then, we will look at students who did not meet expectations. The gaps may be great, but we will work with them on unfinished learning. Maybe 65 percent of our scholars will fit into this category, about 20 percent may be on track and the rest may be advanced.

*Continued on page 7*



*Romikianta Sneed is principal of the DISD's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Arts Academy. Photo by Andrew Kaufmann/George W. Bush Presidential Center.*

# VOLUNTEER Appreciation



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*HALL Group*



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We couldn't do it without...

*Alicia Ovalle*

Please check [TheStewpot.org](http://TheStewpot.org) for virtual volunteer opportunities. There are no in-person volunteer openings at this time.

Continued from page 6

We are hearing about the COVID-slide, and buzzwords about what has happened over the last six months. I am trying to reframe and reset and think not about the COVID-slide, but about accelerated growth. We know our scholars can and will exceed expectations when given the right environment.

The mindset about what our students are not able to do got us into the ACE model. We can no longer just close gaps and expect our scholars to be prepared. We need to think about their accelerated growth.

This will be difficult as some of our scholars will be receiving instruction or reading a book for the first time in six months. But if we think only of that or about unfinished learning, it will be heavy on everyone, especially our teachers who are on the front-lines. That's why we need to think about accelerated growth.

**If schools have to return to online learning at some point this fall, what plans exist for that possibility?**

The school building would definitely remain open. We have to serve parents. Ever since March, we have had families calling for food and other needs. We have been here on campus as essential workers for our community. That's true for many Dallas ISD principals. Our plan is to prepare our staff for online teaching and the platforms we will use before our first day of school.

**Are you getting state and federal money to help with this crisis?**

Our district will. And the district is extremely gracious in making sure all schools in Dallas ISD get what they need. And we use some money from our ACE program to help with items like uniforms and school supplies. This is an example of equity and excellence.

**However learning might occur this fall, what are your plans for helping students with their social-emotional needs?**

We can't do anything without addressing those needs first. Our three core values—growth mindset, high expectations and inspiring relationships—are at the heart of everything we do here at MLK. Our scholars know we love them by showing how much we care for them and their families.

We will use the Sanford Harmony Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) program to assist with students and their social-emotional needs. We are starting with our teachers and seeing how they and their families are doing during this time. That will be a focus during our first professional development day. We also have an extra assistant principal and an extra counselor, which is part of the district's strategy to assist schools with high needs. They will help our teachers manage emotions.

Because we value and respect our teachers' social-emotional needs, they will be prepared to rebuild SEL skills in students. Our teachers will have multiple chances to prepare for our students, who will need many opportunities to adjust after this interruption in learning. This is all part of our Phase 1 of reopening.

During our first few weeks of school, whether virtually or in-person, we are giving our students at least half an hour a day to talk about what they have experienced during COVID. We will do this in increments, starting with morning arrival in our gym with soft music, uplifting videos and planned SEL time. Some of our students have not had the opportunity to visit with therapists, so we want to assist with helping our kids heal. We have worked with district SEL coordinators to assist with positive adult-student relationships during COVID.

**And if you have to go back to all online learning this fall, will you continue to provide food?**

Yes, that is a district initiative, and we will work with partners to support our families.

What we didn't expect were the families who suffered a decrease in wages and how much that loss affected their food security. The school district even delivered food to families who lacked transportation.

We are not just about academics. We truly care about educating the whole child. We provide a holistic approach to breaking the cycle of poverty, starting with meeting the most basic need of having enough to eat.

We remind our students who are experiencing homelessness that this too will pass. They are only experiencing homelessness. They will not be homeless all their lives.

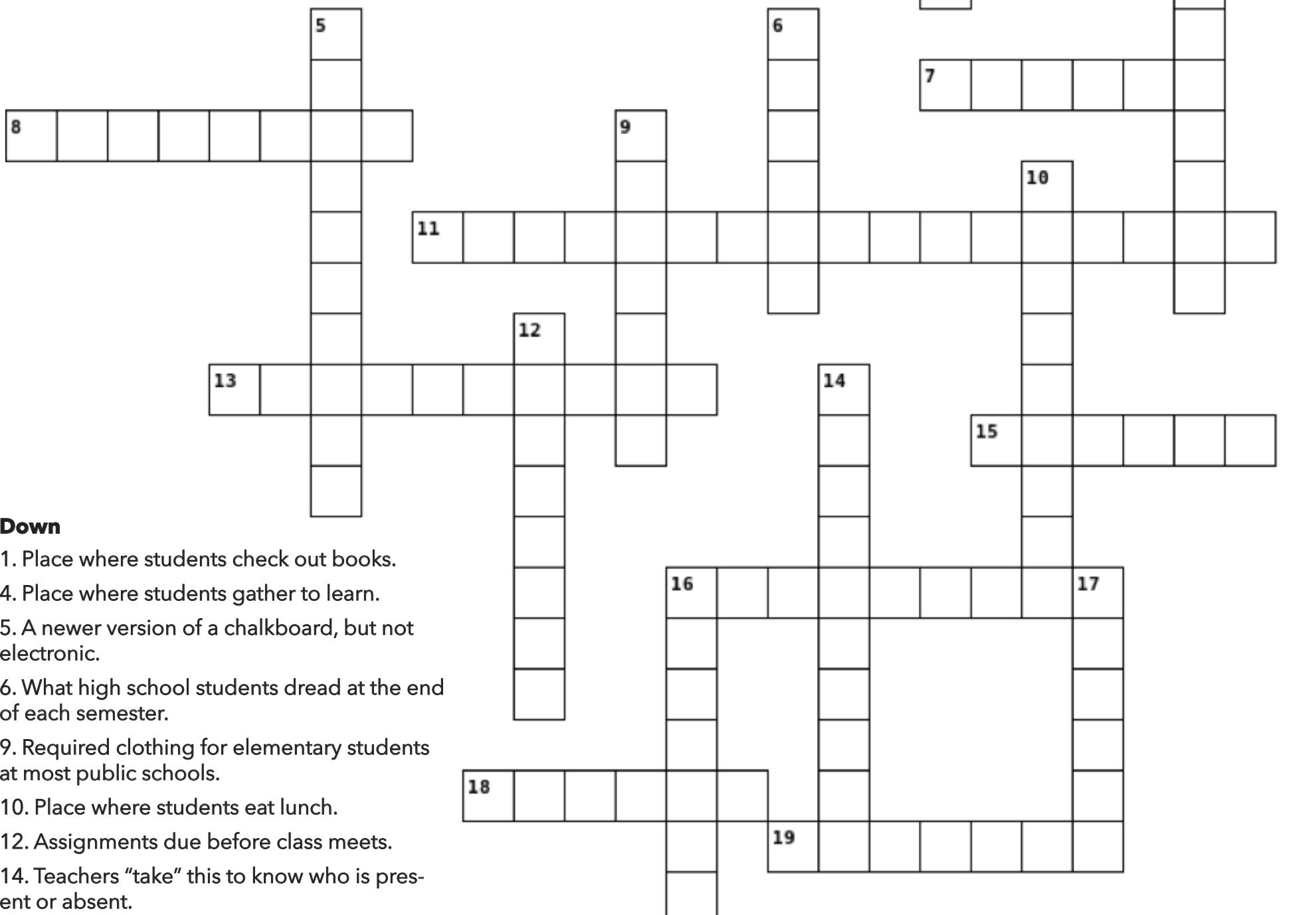
*Bill McKenzie is a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas and The STREETZine Editorial Advisory Board.*

# Back-to-School Days

By Jennifer Nagorka

## Across

2. Students' favorite time of the school day.
3. Sometimes, these seem to weigh as much as the students wearing them.
7. To help you know how you are doing, teachers give you these.
8. Allows thirsty students to get a drink of water during school.
11. Class for exercise and playing sports.
13. An electronic version of a chalkboard.
15. Outdoor play time for younger students.
16. The person in charge at a public school.
18. A writing instrument that makes it easy to correct mistakes.
19. Person who educates students.



## Down

1. Place where students check out books.
4. Place where students gather to learn.
5. A newer version of a chalkboard, but not electronic.
6. What high school students dread at the end of each semester.
9. Required clothing for elementary students at most public schools.
10. Place where students eat lunch.
12. Assignments due before class meets.
14. Teachers "take" this to know who is present or absent.
16. A sound-it-out method of teaching children to read.
17. Place for students to store personal items.

# A Little More Good

By Jenna Minser

*Like so many others, INSP intern Jenna Minser's life was completely upended because of COVID-19. As we all adapt to our new normal, it can be easy to focus on the bad things. Yet, it's more important than ever to find the big things we can be grateful for and the small things we can do to make the world a little better.*

I had three months left of my study abroad experience in Edinburgh, Scotland when my program was cancelled. In one fell swoop, I was heading back to my hometown, accepting the reality that my post-graduation plans in May wouldn't happen and realizing my future was murky at best. Like almost everyone else around the world, my life was upended by COVID-19.

In fact, it only took a few short days from when I was booking flights around Europe with my friends and spending afternoons exploring Edinburgh before I boarded a terrifying flight home with hundreds of other Americans amid an unprecedented outbreak. It was March 11 when I woke up to a phone call at 2:00 AM from my mom telling me that the US had announced a travel ban from Europe. By March 18, I was home.

My story is not unique. It is one that echoes not only the experience of thousands of other university students whose study abroad was cut unexpectedly short but of students all around the world in their last year of school, robbed of a celebratory

***I can support my community simply through phone calls, kind words and a positive attitude. It won't make everything better, but it will do some good.***

and memorable final term. I'm now back in my parents' house and, like so many others in my position, won't be leaving anytime soon.

With everything that's happening, it's easy to forget the things that I'm grateful for: my family and friends are all safe and healthy. I had a home to come back to and supportive parents who love me. I have a big backyard, a Netflix subscription and plenty of time to video chat with my friends who are in the same boat. But it's also just as easy to forget that a lot of people have it worse.

One of the best parts of my study abroad experience, though it was cut short, was an editorial internship I had with the International Network of Street Papers (INSP). Not only was I able to write for a group of publications that reached people all around the world, but I was welcomed into a vibrant community of people working towards social good. Through INSP, I was able to speak with vendors facing homelessness from a multitude of places, interviewed companies dedicated to making positives changes in their neighborhoods and, most importantly, learned a lot more about the challenges people who face homelessness and job insecurity cope with. COVID-19 has only made things worse.

I feel a near-constant worry for the future. Not just my future, but my friends' futures. I'm resentful that my international adventure was cut short. I'm

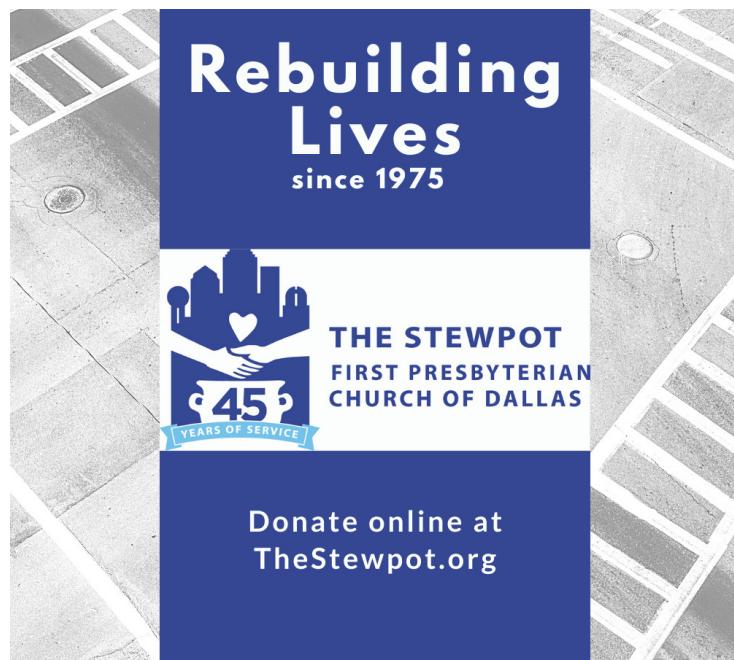
stressed about the fact that my plans are uncertain and that I might still be at my childhood desk a year from now. I'm trying to balance supporting my community – both among my immediate neighbors and those who are also graduating from university during this global pandemic – while trying not to go crazy myself.

Sometimes, it feels like I don't have the emotional capacity to think about people who are in much worse situations than me. The thought that there are so many without safe spaces to self-isolate, without jobs and without a support network to lean on feels overwhelming. I think a lot of people feel that way. It's the same reason that I feel unjust complaining about my own life. Yes, I lost a lot because of the coronavirus, but it's nothing compared to what others are going through.

However, my experiences with INSP are helping to inform what I can do for those people struggling right now. The idea of trying to change and fix what the entire world is experiencing is unfathomable, just as it is to not allow ourselves to mourn the things we have lost, even if others are worse off. Instead, I'm trying to focus on what I can do: I can care for people, myself included.

I can bring my grandparents and their neighbors groceries. I can donate to charities doing good work. I can be supportive of my friends who are self-isolating in toxic environments. I can cut myself slack – sleep a lot, take walks, drop expectations that I must accomplish a million goals during quarantine. I can support my community simply through phone calls, kind words and a positive attitude. It won't make everything better, but it will do some good. And I think we all need a little more good right now.

*Courtesy of INSP.ngo.*



**inspiring journalism**  
**International Network of Street Papers**  
*Supporting a network of 100 street papers in 35 countries.*

# The Great Outdoor

By: Vincent Carter

Being homeless is like being in the wilderness.

There is danger;

Have to be careful.

The mountains of rock and trees

Appear to reach for the sky—

God's natural beauty,

So pleasing to the eye.

They surround a clear blue lake

Filled with water so cold.

This is the kind of place

You'd want to live as you grow old.

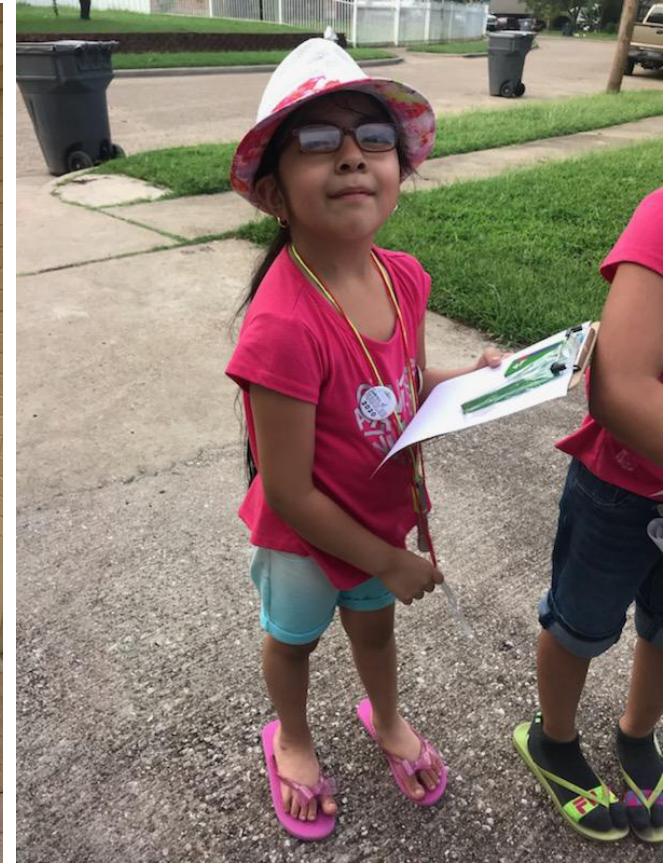
The winters can be very harsh,

The summers unforgiving,

But the one thing that will be known:

That a place this beautiful is for living.

*Vincent Carter is a client of The Stewpot.*



*Students come to pick up their Camp in a Box and other summer activities provided by The Stewpot's Children and Youth Program.*



## DIAL 211

For help finding food or housing, child care, crisis counseling or substance abuse treatment.

## ANONYMOUS

AVAILABLE 24/7, 365 DAYS A YEAR

2-1-1 Texas helps Texas citizens connect with state and local health and human services programs.

## Key to July Crossword:

### Urban Creatures

#### Across

- 2. Squirrel
- 4. Raccoon
- 6. Moths
- 8. Canine
- 10. Spiders
- 11. Cockroach
- 14. Mouse

#### Down

- 1. Pigeons
- 3. Mosquito
- 4. Rat
- 5. Grackles
- 7. Snakes
- 9. Crickets
- 12. Cat
- 13. Possum

*A child works on an activity from her Camp in a Box.*

# Around The Stewpot: Children and Youth Summer Programs

By: Alma A. Reyes

*For this month's Around The Stewpot, STREETZine asked Alma A. Reyes, the manager of Children and Youth Programs at The Stewpot, to talk about how The Stewpot has adapted its Children and Youth Summer Programs to offer high-quality services while conforming to new COVID-19 safety measures.*

We experienced our very first Virtual Summer Camp here at The Stewpot. Typically, we'd be on the campus of the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas, and you'd hear the laughter of children across the building. However, we had to adapt to a new format of teaching and assisting our students. This summer we had five talented summer instructors that focused on teaching art, science, fitness and nutrition, cultures and the 3R's (reading, writing and arithmetic). We also had our partners: the North Texas Food Bank (specifically, their Cooking Matters Program), Our Friend's Place, North Texas Alliance to Reduce Unintended Pregnancy in Teens (NTARUPT) and SPARK! By Noggin Educational Foundation.

In preparation for our summer classes, each student was provided materials for each class, and families that needed computers were lent one for the summer. Fortunately, the majority still had their electronic devices provided by the school district.

***There was chaos, but all of this was worth handling with patience and grace once we saw the smiling faces of our students—students that we had not seen in months.***

Our first day went as well as we could've expected: lots of excitement trying to figure out the schedule, entering Zoom calls and finding the volume button or locating the camera. There was chaos, but all of this was worth handling with patience and grace once we saw the smiling faces of our students—students that we had not seen in months. We quickly jumped in to face the challenges of the first day.

We felt encouraged and kept on. As the second week came to a close, the elementary students expressed being sad that summer classes were over.

During Noggin's programming, which ran for four weeks and focused on reading, math and career days, students were able to accumulate points for their participation, attendance and sportsmanship to win prizes, with the grand prize being a PS4.

On average, we had about 22 elementary students attend our virtual programming, ranging from



***Art class at The Stewpot's Virtual Summer Camp.***

third to seventh grade. Our first and second graders received a Camp in a Box, along with a box of activities provided by the Children and Youth program. Their participation brought us to a total of 32 children served this summer.

For our second part of virtual summer, we had students in eighth through twelfth grade participate in three classes (art, science and fitness/nutrition).



***A child completes camp activities at home.***

They joined NTARUPT's Be Proud! Be Responsible! curriculum and Our Friend's Place through various lessons and topics (i.e. finance, voting, life skills).

Students also had an opportunity to hear from various professionals in different fields about their careers and goals during our "C & Y Presents" after-

noon classes. We are so appreciative that we had so many people willing to talk about their careers. The professions included, but were not limited to, social work, computer information systems, teaching, civil engineering, counseling and theology.

On average, we had about 12 students daily. Our numbers are usually higher. However, due to the circumstances, some students opted to work if they were able to help their families or had been affected by COVID-19. We reached out to those families and safely delivered food through the Family Stabilization Program's food distribution work.

Our parents were also involved by attending NTARUPT's "Families Talking Together," a two-hour intervention program for parents of pre-teens and teens. This program is set to help parents effectively communicate with their pre-teen or teen and strengthen their relationship. We had a great turnout and parents expressed their wishes to continue the classes throughout the school year.

Overall, we had a great month of virtual programming, great staff and great volunteers that helped make this summer a successful one in spite of the challenges. I felt encouraged that, even through these times, we can continue to provide a space for our students to learn, grow and feel supported.

*Alma A. Reyes is the manager of Children and Youth Programs at The Stewpot.*

## Street Newspapers - A Voice for the Homeless & Impoverished

### What is STREETZine?

STREETZine is a nonprofit newspaper published by The Stewpot of First Presbyterian Church for the benefit of people living in poverty. It includes news, particularly about issues important to those experiencing homelessness. STREETZine creates direct economic opportunity. New vendors receive ten free papers. After the first ten, vendors pay twenty-five cents for a paper to be distributed for a one-dollar or more donation. Vendors typically profit seventy-five cents from each paper. Vendors are self-employed and set their own hours. Distributing STREETZine is protected by the First Amendment.

## Advertise in STREETZine

Support STREETZine and its vendors with your business or personal advertisements and announcements.

**\$25.00 - Business Card  
(3.5 x 2)**

**\$50.00 - Box  
(3.5 x 4)**

**\$100.00 - Jumbo  
(6.5 x 5)**

**\$200.00 - Half Page  
(6.5 x 10)**

**\$400.00 - Full Page  
(12 x 10)**

Email:  
[streetzine@thestewpot.org](mailto:streetzine@thestewpot.org)

**STREETZine**

Self-Help For People Living In Poverty

### Distributing STREETZine is protected by the First Amendment.

STREETZine Vendors are self employed and set their own hours.

They are required to wear a vendor badge at all times when distributing the paper. In order to distribute STREETZine vendors agree to comply with Dallas City Ordinances.

If at any time you feel a vendor is in violation of any Dallas City Ordinance please contact us immediately with the vendor name or number at [streetzine@thestewpot.org](mailto:streetzine@thestewpot.org)

### CHAPTER 31, SECTION 31-35 of the Dallas City Code PANHANDLING OFFENSES

Solicitation by coercion; solicitation near designated locations and facilities; solicitation anywhere in the city after sunset and before sunrise any day of the week. Exception can be made on private property with advance written permission of the owner, manager, or other person in control of the property.

A person commits an offense if he conducts a solicitation to any person placing or preparing to place money in a parking meter.

The ordinance specifically applies to solicitations at anytime within 25 feet of:

- Automatic teller machines;
- Exterior public pay phones;
- Public transportation stops;
- Self service car washes;
- Self service gas pumps;

An entrance or exit of a bank, credit union or similar financial institution;  
Outdoor dining areas of fixed food establishments.

**What should we cover next? Fill out our survey at:  
<https://bit.ly/2WbMRsg>**

### Sponsor a vendor for \$15.00\*

Your vendor will receive sixty papers which will help him or her earn \$60.00.

Please include the vendor's name and badge number on this form.

Vendor Name

Vendor #

Make checks or money orders payable to

The Stewpot and send them to:

**STREETZine 1835 Young Street, Dallas, TX 75201**

\*If your vendor is no longer distributing papers your donation will be applied towards papers that are shared among active vendors.

[ ] Check here if you prefer that your check be returned if your vendor is no longer active.

**Only badged vendors are authorized to distribute STREETZine. VENDOR #**