

“For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”

Luke 12:48

For several years, *Tyler Today* devoted the pages of one issue a year to spotlighting people from our community who have made a difference in the lives of their neighbors through their unselfish acts of giving. Celebrating the philanthropy of our neighbors, and most especially by sharing the personal stories that motivate these individuals to give of their time and money, provides a source of inspiration to many of our readers. Many of us are grateful to live in a community filled

with so many people who share a commitment to helping others. It is a characteristic making Tyler unique and is one reason our community stands out above others across the state. In this issue, we are spotlighting three organizations in Tyler that provide needed help to people throughout our community.

Hundreds of organizations are worthy of spotlighting. It is an arbitrary choice that results in the list selected

for this article. In time, we hope to be able to spotlight every organization that deserves recognition. In this edition, *Tyler Today* is proud to single out Mustangs of East Texas for their work with The East Texas Crisis Center; The Smith County Medical Society Alliance for their annual Book Fair in support of healthcare scholarships; and The Hospice of East Texas for their support to patients with life-limiting conditions.

The East Texas Crisis Center Mustangs of East Texas



Mustangs of East Texas with 2013 Raffle Car



Robbie Ott dedicates the car to her late husband, Harry

Lana Peacock is the Executive Director of The East Texas Crisis Center. She will tell you that abuse of any kind, particularly family violence and sexual abuse, is not something people talk about easily. “Since its beginning in 1978 as the Smith County Citizens Against Rape, The East Texas Crisis Center has been a haven for thousands of victims of family violence, sexual

assault and violent crime,” Peacock points out. From its humble beginnings as an all-volunteer organization, The East Texas Crisis Center has grown into a five-county service that includes Smith, Henderson, Van Zandt, Wood and Rains counties. “Wonderful supporters throughout the community make it possible for the Center to provide basic necessities,

counseling services and a safe shelter to women and children victimized by violence and abuse. One such group is Mustangs of East Texas,” Peacock continued.

This past October marked the kickoff for the 2013 Auto & Cycle Show, scheduled for February 2013. The annual event includes raffling a car,



with the sale proceeds benefiting The East Texas Crisis Center. "We're a bunch of guys whose hobby is restoring Mustangs. We got involved with the East Texas Crisis Center twenty-three years ago because we believe in their mission," says Craig Chesley, a club member since 1989. Through the annual Auto & Cycle Show, Mustangs of East Texas has been able to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars to assist The East Texas Crisis Center. The car this year is a restored 1965 fastback Mustang. Club member Harry Ott began the restoration, but passed away before he could complete it. His wife Robbie donated the car to Mustangs of East Texas with the condition that its sale would benefit The East Texas Crisis Center. Members of the Club took over the restoration project. "Probably thirty club members worked on the car for a period of about six months," Chesley says. In addition to their labor, club members also donated cash and parts. "We had one member donate the transmission, and another member was responsible for all the paint and bodywork, and still another located and paid for exhaust headers. It was truly a club effort."

The vintage car sold for \$35,000 to David Irwin from Tyler Ford, who in turn donated it back to ETCC as the raffle car for the up-coming 2013 Auto & Cycle Show. "The kickoff in

October was hugely successful," says Irwin who helped emcee the event with Doc Deason and Sheriff J. B. Smith. "Last year, the raffle and auto show raised over ninety-thousand dollars. Current receipts already exceeded last year's total, and since we are still selling tickets until the raffle is held in February, we are confident we will set a record this year." Irwin began his association with The East Texas Crisis Center ten years ago. He supports the charity for two primary reasons: First is his belief that any successful business has a responsibility to support the community that provides its opportunity to succeed; and secondly, he believes in the organization itself. "The East Texas Crisis Center is not one of those glamorous organizations; in fact they were kind of an underdog. However, the work they accomplish - rescuing women and children from domestic violence is worthy of our support," Irwin explains his personal commitment, "The first time I toured their facility, it ripped my heart out to realize that there was a need for such a service. They do a difficult job that needs doing. They deserve the support they get from an organization like the Mustangs of East Texas, a group of people who don't mind getting their hands dirty to make something good happen." Raffle tickets remain on sale until the night of the event, February 3, 2013. Find out more at www.etc.org