



# NEWS

GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER AUTHORITY  
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## **GBRA Employees Complete “Our Day to Shine” Volunteer Project**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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SEGUIN – Painting dormitories, pouring sidewalks and building bleachers may not sound like typical activities for a state river authority, but they were all in a day’s work for the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority’s “Our Day To Shine” volunteer program held April 13, 2002 at the Baptist Youth Ranch in Luling, Texas.

The Volunteer Program was founded in December 2000 to help improve the quality of life in the communities GBRA serves throughout its ten-county district. GBRA employees, who receive no pay for their volunteer service, donate their time, energy, talents and skills to help non-profit or government organizations engaged in civic, health, education, social services and other charitable pursuits.

The program’s annual highlight is “Our Day to Shine” – a full-day event dedicated to one significant project that has broad community impact. This year, approximately 105 volunteers arrived at the Baptist Children’s Home in Luling, Texas early in the morning to complete an ambitious schedule by the end of the day. Several weeks before, the volunteer program committee had conducted interviews and an inventory of needs, bought supplies, reserved equipment and handed out assignments to each employee.

At the end of the day, the tired but rewarded volunteers had painted the interior of the long-range facility, the exterior of the emergency shelter, built bleachers for the riding arena, replaced wood with metal siding on the barn, provided electrical assistance and landscaped various areas of the campus.

The Baptist Youth Ranch is a facility that cares for neglected and/or abused children removed from their homes by Child Protective Services. The two programs provided by the Ranch are an emergency shelter, and an extended care facility. The emergency shelter, on a short-term basis, cares for children who have either just been removed from their home or are in between placements. In addition to the basics of food, clothing and shelter, this program provides assessments of children to help in the planning process for their next placement or return home.

The extended care program cares for girls ages 5-18 who are expected to remain in care for at least one year. Many of the girls come to the Ranch as young teens and stay through high school graduation.

While at the Ranch, children are provided long-term therapy and an overall healing atmosphere in which to live. Their behavior is 'graded' on a level system in which they can earn or lose privileges. Independent living skills are developed progressively. Academics and participation in extra-curricular activities are encouraged. The children are also introduced to a therapy called 'Equine Connection' that involves interacting with horses. They learn to read the animal's body language, which eventually leads them to make changes in their own attitudes and develop a trust and harmony with the animal.

Last year's GBRA "Our Day to Shine" event took place in the City of Cuero, that was devastated during the Flood of October 1998. GBRA volunteers visited the area and talked to city leaders, charitable and religious organizations to determine where help was most needed. Because much of the flooding occurred in the lower income areas where most people had no flood insurance, the project assisted nine homeowners --mostly elderly and disabled—to make needed repairs to their homes and property.

The GBRA Volunteer Program is also active during the Christmas holiday season, helping the Blue Santa programs in the Seguin, Victoria and Pt. Lavaca areas, the Eagles Lodge Annual Christmas Dinner and Coats for Kids. This year, GBRA has inaugurated a scholarship program and will award two \$2,000 scholarships to deserving seniors in its service area.