



2017-18 NBA Ministry and Mission Grantees

Impact Report:

RISE (Respect, Include, Support, Embrace) and SHINE (Supporting Hearts in New Experiences)

Midland, Texas

The purpose of FCC's **RISE and SHINE** program is to create a faith community of care where children with special needs and their families are accepted, included, and supported in the life of the church. 20% of the youth at FCC have special needs, and the church has been able to successfully include them in the Sunday school and youth programs. The church aims to upgrade the special needs Sunday school with sensory materials, specialized toys, and equipment that can be used to improve fine and gross motor skills, as well as develop a curriculum that can be adapted to different levels.

Mission Area: At-Risk Children and Youth **Catalyst Grant:** US \$2,000

Goals, Outcomes, and Learnings:

We used the grant funds to purchase equipment and supplies for RISE and the sensory room. For SHINE (young adults, ages 18-25, with special needs), we used the grant funds for social events. We made plans for a Sunday school class for the young adults, identified an online curriculum called Together, from Friendship Ministries, and purchased AV equipment for a room that was identified for the SHINE Sunday school class.

We were able to purchase specialized equipment that help children with autism and other special needs on Sunday mornings. In addition, the Children's Learning Center, a pre-school at First Christian Church, was involved in the planning and purchasing of equipment. By sharing these rooms, the Children's Learning Center expanded their

capabilities to include children with special needs. FCC also hired people to work in the sensory room on Sundays. Volunteers were recruited to help on Sundays.

We have learned that the starting point for our high functioning young adults with special needs should be a class that puts them with others their age. Inclusion should be the goal of any special needs ministry. To label them and put them in a box is not the best way to start with this population.

As the health and social services general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the National Benevolent Association partners with congregations, regions, general ministries, and a variety of Disciples-related health and social service providers to create communities of compassion and care. Founded in 1887 by six women responding to the needs of the day and on their doorsteps, for more than 130 years the NBA has continued to serve "the least of these." Learn more at www.nbacares.org.