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Church Outreach Program Assists Perris Residents



Grove Community Church Outreach Minister Noland Turnage shows some of the new merchandise the church distributes to underprivileged residents at the program center on the Perris City Hall Campus.

The move from their home to a former City of Perris department office allows Pastor Noland Turnage and his wife Becky to expand their outreach to underprivileged moms and their children.

The larger space means they can give away more pajamas, pants, dresses, shirts and sweaters—all new and donated by a variety of merchants—to families who come from as far away as Indio and Escondido to receive assistance.

The added room allows them to distribute more toys, strollers and cribs.

It makes it easier to distribute boxes of canned and boxed goods and fresh meats and vegetables donated by members of The Grove Community Church, where they worship.

And that makes them happy.

"We are beyond grateful that the City of Perris made this space available to us," said Noland Turnage, who serves as Community Outreach Minister for the non-denominational Grove Community Church. "The City has been great. Our new location has given us a face in the City. It helps us and it helps our clientele."

The Turnages and a handful of dedicated volunteers moved into the former Public Works Administration offices in October. They expect to assist about 1,000 families this year, twice as many as they could previously. The City leases the Grove Outreach Center to the congregation for \$1 a year.

Becky Turnage said her living room used to be stacked floor to ceiling with totes stuffed with clothing and other items slated for dispersal. Moving onto the Perris City Hall Campus means she and her husband finally have some well-deserved personal space.

"It's given us more of a personal life," she said. "It's nice to be able to provide new clothing and toys to those in need. They don't have to buy from yard sales or second-hand stores."



Pastor Noland Turnage, his wife, Becky Turnage and "super volunteers" Betti Woords, Orretha Butler and Yanet Alejandres ensure the success of the toy and clothing distribution program housed in a building on the Perris City Hall Campus.

The outreach center is open Tuesday and Thursday mornings and assists clients with appointments. Donations come from merchants like Carter's Baby Clothes, Toys R Us and Babies R Us. The Grove Community Church congregation is taking part in the April 23 health fair on the City Hall Campus, offering some health screenings and raffling off prizes.

Stephanie Torres dropped by recently with two of her four children, Roxanne, 5, and Alex, 1.

She said the outreach program proved indispensable after her son was born six weeks premature. Torres said the Turnages delivered tiny clothes to the family home and to her husband's place of work. During her recent visit, Torres picked up t-shirts, pajamas, pants and a jacket.

"Clothes get expensive with four kids," she said. "Being able to come here and get clothes is a huge help."

Torres said she's equally happy the City has stepped up to assist the ministry.

"It's great they're willing to help because it's really about the kids," Torres said. "It's great the Perris cares about its community."



Stephanie Torres and her children, Roxanne, 5, and Adam, 1, who received some clothing recently thanks to the Grove Community Church outreach program.

Veronica Contreras came to the Grove outreach to pick up pants, shirts, pajamas, sweaters and underwear for her son, Alex, 18 months.

"It makes a big difference for my family," Contreras said.

Noland Turnage said the City's assistance helps fuel his passion for helping those in Perris who need a hand up.

"I love trying to help those who need a little boost!" he said. "It's a joy to be able to connect with the families of this community."

For more information about the Grove Community Church ministries call 951.398.9346 or 951.571.9090, ext. 2131.



Veronica Contreras and her son, Alex, 18 months, with the toys and clothing they received from the Grove Community Church program located in a City Hall Campus building.

Media Contact
Joe Vargo
Public Information Officer
951-943-6100
jvargo@cityofperris.org



Perris City Hall
101 N. D Street
Perris, CA 92570

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