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Working Together to Grow the Kingdom

LEADERSHIP NETWORK®

www.leadnet.org

2626 Cole Avenue, Suite 900 | Dallas, TX 75204 | 800.765.5323 | 214.969.5950 | 214.969.9392 Fax | client.care@leadnet.org

## Putting Others Before Themselves

HELPING  
SCHOOL CHILDREN  
WITH LIFE'S  
NECESSITIES

**FEATURED CHURCH:**

The Fellowship at Cinco  
Ranch

**LOCATION:**

Katy, Texas

**ESTABLISHED:** 1994

**SERVICES:** 3 weekly services

**AVERAGE ATTENDANCE:** 525

The Golden Rule is something children learn in their first days of Sunday School. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The meaning is simple and clear. It makes sense to even the youngest among us.

But that emphasis on "others" can be easy to lose. When times get busy or money becomes tight, it's often the "others" who lose out. It can be difficult for people to think of others when they have overwhelming needs of their own.

The Fellowship at Cinco Ranch is a church committed to putting others back out in front. This group of caring Christians devotes its time, energy and finances to reaching out to its community. A member of Leadership Network's Externally Focused Churches Leadership Community, The Fellowship does unto others and expects nothing in return.

In fact, the church leadership challenges its members by asking, "If we were to shut our doors today, would the community be worse off as a result?" They want that answer to be an emphatic "yes!"

### THE YOUNGEST 'OTHERS'

High-risk students are just one of the "others" the church embraces. The Fellowship supports Morton Ranch Junior High School by providing funds, gifts, clothing and services for its students.

The coordinator for these efforts is Karen Lerich, a church member and Morton Ranch Junior High's school nurse.

"I'm here at the school," Karen says. "I see the needs. I know how and where we can make a difference in these students' lives."



Karen Lerich counsels two students in her office at Morton Ranch Junior High School.

When Karen observed that many of Morton Ranch's students could use some help, she took her concerns to Pastor Jerry Edmonson. He challenged her to find a way to help these children. Karen shared the students' needs with her small "Life Group" at The Fellowship. Group members immediately volunteered their support.

## GRATEFUL STUDENTS

Karen says the students at Morton Ranch face difficult challenges every day. The Fellowship wants to make sure being prepared for school isn't one of those hardships.

During the past few years, Karen and other members of The Fellowship have done small things to make big impacts in the lives of students. As their school nurse, Karen hears firsthand about many of the students' needs. Other times, school counselors ask Karen if her church would be able to help a particular student.

## 'IF WE WERE TO SHUT OUR DOORS TODAY, WOULD THE COMMUNITY BE WORSE OFF AS A RESULT?'

Some of the church's acts of caring include purchasing school uniforms for children, buying a child's school lunch for the entire year, purchasing school supplies and inviting the teachers to a church-sponsored CPR training class.

The church members give of their time and talents

"I love being a part of a church that cares about others more than itself. Helping others is our priority. It's not something we do as a once-a-year project. Serving others is always talked about. In fact, it's a foundation of our church. We don't reach out to the community for any personal rewards; it's just what we do. I think it's the best way to be."



—Karen Lerich, member, The Fellowship at Cinco Ranch

freely. Karen distributes the donations to students with the simple statement, "This is from a local church."

She doesn't want the children to feel as if they owe anyone for the gifts. Instead, she and the members give generously as a way to keep "others" the focus of their Christian lives. LN

## WHAT LEADERSHIP NETWORK MEANS TO ME

One of the challenges facing every pastor is leadership. Whether it's self-leadership, vision casting, leadership development of staff and ministry, or learning to act as a servant leader, it is true that everything rises and falls on leadership.

That's why Leadership Network has been a key partner in the ministry of The Fellowship at Cinco Ranch. As a part of Leadership Network's Externally Focused Churches Leadership Community, I have been challenged to think, dream and strategize with other churches that are impacting the world we live in.

Not long ago at one of our Leadership Community gatherings, we discussed the fact that good is sometimes the enemy of great, and great doesn't come without God-focused leadership. This last year, Leadership Network has challenged



our team to be God-focused in our leadership as we turn our dreams into effective strategies for community and global impact that focus on attempting and accomplishing great things for God.

—Jerry Edmonson, Lead Pastor, The Fellowship at Cinco Ranch,  
[www.thefellowship.org](http://www.thefellowship.org)