



SPACE CENTER ROTARY -

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

by Tom Wier

Think about this-- One million students drop out of school every year, consigning themselves to the more menial jobs, if any--and sometimes drug or alcohol abuse, or teen pregnancy. In our Texas prisons, 90% are dropouts!

It makes us want to do something about it. Well, our Dr. Huey Barnett did do something about it. He organized Bridgeport Communities in Schools, an in-school dropout prevention program modeled after the best programs that he could find in the nation for dropout prevention. Working with the Clear Creek Independent School District, Bridgeport established a pilot program at League City Intermediate School in September 1989. During its first year Bridgeport provided a variety of services to 249 "at-risk" students and completed the year with a 100% retention rate! ---Phenomenal!

But here is where Space Center Rotary comes in. First, we gave Bridgeport a "startup" grant in keeping with our policy of helping projects get off the ground at inception, the time when it is hardest for them to raise money on their own. As Huey says, "Space Center Rotary believed in and supported us when we had nothing to show but a dream." So did other special friends of Huey, who is now Executive Director.

Second, the Bridgeport leadership is loaded with Space Center Rotarians. Terry Hesson is president and Dixie Robison is vice-president. Both are long time workers with youth. Other SC Rotarians helping as board members to make this project go are Larry Burrow, Jim Hargrove, Jack Lister, Sam Marullo and Steve Waldner. They have a proven product and are committed to expansion, an expansion already started in Webster Intermediate and Clear Creek High School with the goal of all schools in CCISD as funds become available. With a forthcoming \$200,000 fundraising campaign about to start, things are moving.

Space Center Rotarians, if you want to be of service to this community, Huey, Terry Hesson and the BCIS board are looking for volunteers to participate in this very satisfying project. Give them a hand! Give yourself a lift! (You do not have to be a certified counselor.)