

## Clopton left physical therapy for neighborhood therapy

By: Kate Hutson

After 25 years of helping kids with physical disabilities strive for their dreams, Nancy Clopton should have been ready to chase her own.

Not exactly.

Having retired as a physical therapy professor at Texas Tech's Health Sciences Center, Clopton is the volunteer executive director of Hope Community of Shalom.

Hope/Shalom is a neighborhood ministry of the Asbury United Methodist Church, 2002 Ave. T (across from Dupre Elementary), where something good is happening every day of the week.

Based on a national program, Hope/Shalom is the brainchild of Asbury's members. Clopton began as a supporter of the program, then became volunteer director after leaving her post at Tech.

She says she's good at working with parents and overseeing the logistics but terrible at corralling groups of kids. So she lets those who have that gift handle crowd control. Clopton is content to raise money and get the toilets fixed.

This behind-the-scenes work enables all the activities at Hope. On some weekdays, there's the action-learning-packed after-school program led by Esther Moses (but more about her work next column).

On any day you might see learners in the Lighthouse, a room with computers for English-as-second-language, literacy and GED training. These are two of a dozen different opportunities housed in the church's facilities.



**Clopton**

Then, there's the Loaves and Fishes food and clothes pantry. Every Sunday, doors open to those who want to have a meal, pick up needed clothing, and if they desire, attend a service just for them.

On a tour, you can see rooms decorated for everything from arts and crafts to dance and wilderness experiences. Children and teens who come here may not find flashy electronics, but they will get personal, educational and social support.

Another room provides space and assistance for parents who require supervised visitation with their families but who can't afford to pay for it themselves.

Clopton says the center needs volunteers and financial support. It is sponsored by 10 community groups and by individual donations. To contact Hope/Shalom, call 806-762-0829.

When asked why she feels called to this work, Clopton says it was like God put a hand on her shoulder. She says "the job just fit." While soft-spoken and reserved, her eyes brim as she talks about it.

Maybe she's chasing her dream after all.

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