



Thomas Edison said: "There's a way to do it better. Find it."

Thanks to an ah-ha moment and the gumption to see it through, Mission Arlington found it, and the results speak for themselves.

**Doing good on a massive scale**

Mission Arlington®/Mission Metroplex® is a faith-based organization that assists people with their physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs. Founded over 30 years ago and based in Downtown Arlington, Mission Arlington assists 500 people a day and engages over 2,500 volunteers each week. It's a massive logistical undertaking, guided by the organization's core belief in the "ministry of ones," that every person deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.



## **Business as usual**

Among the many services provided, Mission Arlington accepts donations of furniture, clothing, and household items to provide to families in crisis. Each day, the organization picks up close to 100 truck-loads of donated furniture. Until recently, the furniture was unloaded into an old warehouse until all the day's pick-ups were complete. Meanwhile, in the front room, families seeking help described their needs, which staff logged in by hand. By mid-afternoon each day, donations in the warehouse were matched with the log, then delivered to homes of the families.

"The warehouse started empty every morning, filled up through the day, then emptied every evening," said Jim Burgin, communications director and son of Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex founder and executive director Tillie Burgin. "It was an amazing process to watch."

## **Inspiration seeds innovation**

Every successful organization — whether a for-profit or non-profit entity — continuously seeks ways to do more with less. At Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex, overhead costs are kept very low so that nearly 97 cents out of every dollar given goes directly in ministry to people in need.

Still, money isn't the only precious resource. So are volunteers, vehicles, and time. When you don't have a bed for your child to sleep in, time is absolutely of the essence.

Driven by the desire to deliver resources more quickly to the families who need them, Tillie and her team took a hard look at their tried-and-true inventory management system. What if, they wondered, drivers could pick up donations and deliver them at the same time?

## **Saving money, saving time**

Armed with an existing Microsoft Access database, two team members offered to move their offices out of the old warehouse and into a bus parked in a large, adjacent parking lot. Now when furniture arrives on an in-bound truck, they easily direct volunteers to load it straight onto the appropriate out-bound truck for immediate delivery rather than into the warehouse.

"Gratefully, we've learned that it's always possible to improve even long-held practices," said Jim. "Our staff continue to put the needs of people first regardless of the way it impacts their own situation."

The benefits are instantly apparent. The new logistical system is more efficient, making the experience much more pleasant and straightforward for those driving the trucks. Drivers and volunteers who load the furniture only have to move it once – directly from Receiving to Delivery — instead of multiple times, greatly reducing the amount of space and overhead needed for the operation. Fuel costs are also reduced as receiving and delivery trips are combined. Most important, families are getting the help they need in much less time.

## **Get involved**

“Throughout this change, we’ve been reminded once again how generous and supportive our community is,” said Jim. “We only have furniture to give away because people give it, and they have always supported us in any way possible to make the ministry better for the people.”

Donations are always accepted, but at this time of year, school supplies are in highest demand. This fall, Mission Arlington aims to provide over 9,000 Arlington ISD students with school supplies.

Volunteering with Mission Arlington®/Mission Metroplex® is a great way to have fun and to make a difference in the community. Individuals and groups are welcome. Standard volunteer hours are from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Saturdays, although other hours can be arranged.

Learn more about donating and volunteering at [www.missionarlington.org](http://www.missionarlington.org).

## **About Downtown Arlington**

Ranked as one of the top urban districts in the country in 2016 by [TripAdvisor Vacation Rentals](#), Downtown Arlington Texas blends a unique mix of activities, sights, tastes and sounds that attract visitors and locals alike. Within its less than a two-mile radius, Downtown Arlington is home to a top tier public university, prolific cultural arts institutions and live entertainment, exciting NCAA and professional athletics, one-of-a-kind dining and retail, and a supportive business climate. Downtown Arlington brings together a plethora of cultures and inspirations with a character all its own.