

“If you belong to something, you should participate.” These are the words of Helen Jo Crump, an amazing woman who has asked us to share her story with all of you today.

At 85 years old, Ms. Crump is an active, young spirit. She is a retired elementary school secretary from Amarillo, though many people in the Panhandle know her as “The Hat Lady.” She entertains crowds with music, alternating her headwear from her collection of over 200 hats.

Ms. Crump works elections at San Jacinto Elementary School. Former students recognize her, wondering if she is still the school’s beloved secretary. Ms. Crump says that when she began serving as the school’s only secretary in 1963, there were 600 students and she earned \$200 per month. By the time she retired in 1979, she made \$375.

Times have certainly changed, but time hasn’t changed Helen Jo Crump. In fact, she is the oldest active member of the Amarillo Beta Sigma Phi sorority, dedicating 67 years of her life to the women’s service organization.

Recently, when Helen’s 1990 Oldsmobile was in need of new tires, she questioned where she would find the funds to buy them. Her monthly income from her TRS pension is minimal, less than \$600. But Helen “enjoys life and enjoys people,” and sought assistance to replace three tires on her vehicle so she could continue doing the things she loves.

Through the help of TRTF board member John Krodel and Allegra Bush, Helen was able to apply for a grant from the Foundation’s newest charitable program, “A Helping Hand.” “A Helping Hand” provides aid to public education retirees in critical need. After a year of research and hard work, the Foundation launched the program in four districts in February.

Helen Jo Crump was our first applicant, as well as our first recipient. Instead of replacing three of Helen’s tires, the Foundation replaced all four. As Helen explains “guess what I got? A whole new set of tires! I don’t have to worry about getting a flat now!”

The Foundation is honored to present its first grant from “A Helping Hand” to Ms. Crump. Helen embodies what the Texas Retired Teachers Foundation represents: dedication and service to public education.

It is because of people like her and you that we are able to succeed in our mission. Your generosity helped this wonderful lady today, and will help countless other retirees tomorrow and for many years to come. Thank you for belonging to the Texas Retired Teachers Foundation, and especially for participating.