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Blessing box a lasting resource for community

October 30, 2019

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Photo courtesy Facebook

CHRISNEY — For people in Chrisney, a small wooden structure in the parking lot of Chrisney Baptist Church has become an enduring resource.

The little structure is a blessing box — a free-standing, wood box placed in a yard or parking lot that supplies people in need with food and basic toiletry items.

Heritage Hills High School 2018 graduate Savannah McCutchan and her grandfather, Gene Silcox, built the box in the spring of 2018 as McCutchan’s final Girl Scout project before she left for college at Western Kentucky University. Nearly two years later, McCutchan said she’s happy to know it’s still up and being used.

“It’s a really good feeling to know that I made a small impact on my community,” She said during a phone interview from Western Kentucky’s campus.

Back home in Chrisney, the Blessing Box seems to be making more than a small difference. A day rarely passes that First Baptist’s pastor, Rusty Keltner, doesn’t see someone stop by Chrisney Baptist Church to grab a can of food or a toiletry item — or just as often put something in. The latter happened a lot this summer when local gardeners would stop to drop their excess fresh vegetables on the shelves on the backside of the blessing box.

The idea behind the blessing box, Keltner said, is take what you need; leave what you can, and it’s a philosophy that has made the blessing box a ministry that runs itself.

“It’s never been empty or damaged,” Keltner said of the box. “It’s actually been too full at times.”

The service is completely anonymous. Although the church does check on the box to make sure it’s in good shape and stocked, there are no forms to fill out for dropping off items or taking items out. Just stop by and do what you need to do.

McCutchan said she got the idea for the blessing box from the little free libraries that were popping up around the country. The idea of a little free library is similar to a blessing box, but rather than food or toiletries, people take and drop off books. There are several little free libraries in the area, but as far as Keltner knows, Chrisney Baptist has the only blessing box in the area. Across the country, though, there are hundreds of blessing boxes. There’s also a similar program called Little Free Pantry.

The Chrisney box grew out of a need McCutchan saw in her community. At the time, the closest grocery stores were in Santa Claus and Rockport, each a bit of a drive from Chrisney. McCutchan wanted to put something in her town that would provide help to people in a pinch, and she chose to place the box at Chrisney Baptist because her family attends the church. Now, whenever she’s home from college on breaks, she stops by the church to check on the box. Every time she does, she said, she feels gratitude to the church and the community for keeping her project alive.

The blessing box is located in the church’s parking lot at 308 S. Main St., Chrisney.

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