



No portion of this article may be reproduced without  
express written permission of Style Publishing Group, LLC.

©2007 • All rights reserved.



Style Publishing Group  
P.O. Box 1676  
Frisco, Texas 75034  
Phone: 972.335.1181  
Toll Free: 877.781.7067  
Fax: 214.722.2313

E-mail: [info@friscostyle.com](mailto:info@friscostyle.com)  
Web: [www.friscostyle.com](http://www.friscostyle.com)

**Ad Sales: (972) 335-1306**



*Small World Project Board, from left to right: Doug Brown, Rudy Andrea, Ron Polston, Thamara DeLeon, Don Bolen, Jacqueline Bowman and Dick Bowman. Not pictured, James White, Mary Zabel and Rick Reedy.  
photos by John Scott Glass*

# it's a small world after all: big hearts & helping hands

by georgia brown

WHAT BEGAN EIGHT YEARS AGO AS A KIND GESTURE TO HELP A FEW STUDENTS at Frisco's Rogers Elementary School, blossomed into a non-profit organization known as the "Small World project." After reading letters written by her students during a classroom exercise, Thamara DeLeon, a former Rogers Elementary School teacher, was heartbroken and yet inspired by her students' candid words. DeLeon's awakening of sorts moved her to put her bilingual skills to use and make a difference in the lives of those in need.

DeLeon's students, most of who were of a less than modest socioeconomic status, were deprived of the simple things in life. As the mother of five children, she felt compelled to help in some way. With her own resources, she took a few toys, visited students and their families, and listened closely as they shared the hardships they faced. After learning of DeLeon's experience, colleagues and school officials not only encouraged her; they expressed an overwhelming desire to volunteer as well. Former principal Ann Studdard and assistant principal LaDonna Polston of Rogers Elementary, without whom DeLeon claims this compassionate enterprise would not exist, encouraged her to pursue her efforts further. As a result, she formed the Small World project along with co-founders Dick Bowman, Jacqueline Bowman, and

Jim White, and the program, a veritable example of humanity and generosity, has been on the rise ever since. The first year, fifteen students and their families were visited and provided food, clothing, and toys based on the premise of filling the needs of those less fortunate during the holidays. The third year DeLeon and her team astonishingly helped more than one hundred and fifty children throughout the year.

Regardless of the breadth of the project and the board's growth, the focus of the Small World remains on the task at hand, DeLeon says: "to help those in need" while protecting the anonymity of the donors and recipients. And, to see to

it that their charitable goals are met throughout the year and the project maintains its momentum, co-founder and board member Jim White recruits corporations such as CompUSA, K&W Enterprises Inc., Kohl's, Sage Telecom, The Stonebriar Club, Texas Instruments, Tom Thumb, and United American Insurance along with private donors and other benefactors to contribute donations as well as their services.

Consequently, after eight years, the Small World project volunteers gladly continue their philanthropic endeavors. What's more, they have expanded their organization considerably by offering assistance from an emergency fund for special circumstances, such as purchasing eyeglasses or paying electric bills for those in need. While they continue to maintain a back to school program and expand their goals for their holiday agenda, the effort for which they are most proud is the ability to provide scholarships of \$8,000 each; an opportunity they look forward to concentrating on and further developing. Their results speak for themselves. Last year alone, the project assisted more than eight hundred children. And, although Thamara DeLeon has a few more helping hands than she started with and she continuously welcomes new volunteers from the community, her mission remains the same: to help those in need and ensure that "every penny goes to the kids." For more information visit [www.smallworldwithlove.org](http://www.smallworldwithlove.org).



"She was moved to put her *bilingual skills* to use and *make a difference*."

*Georgia Brown is a Dallas-based freelance writer.*