

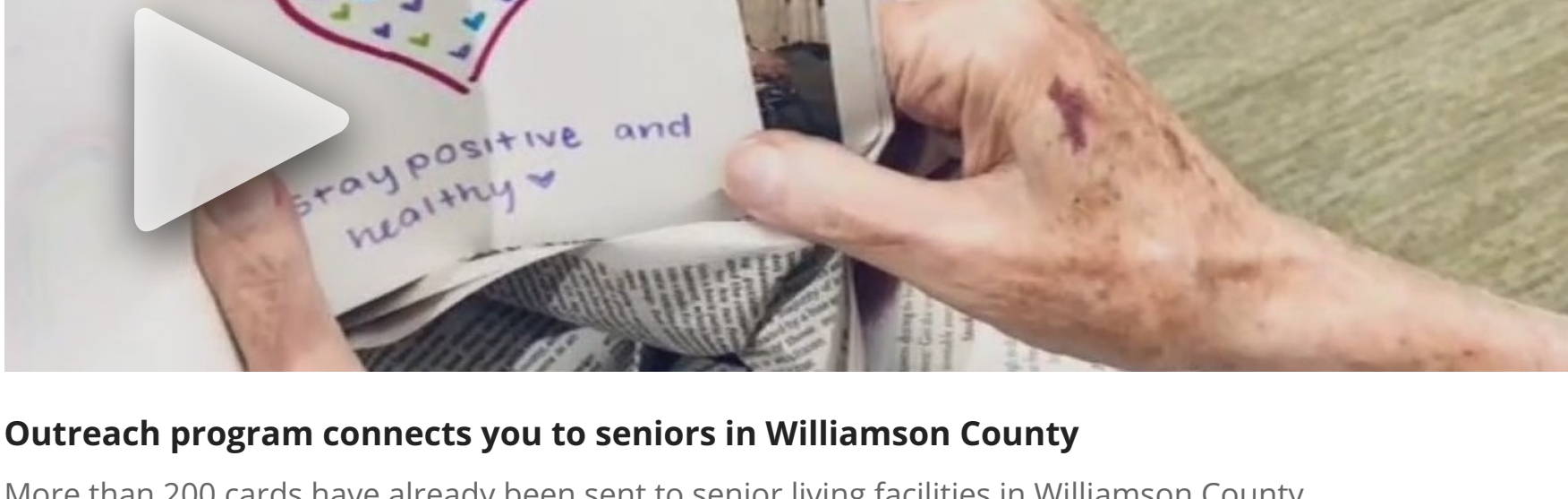
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Outreach program connects you to seniors in Williamson County

By Rudy Koski | Published 3 hours ago | Williamson County | FOX 7 Austin

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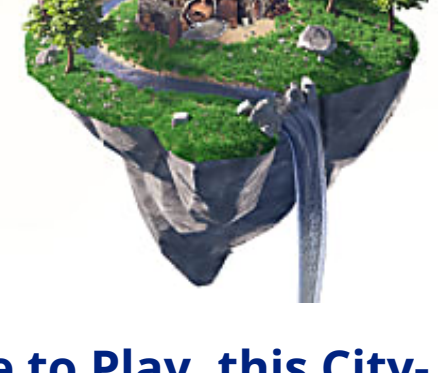
More than 200 cards have already been sent to senior living facilities in Williamson County.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY, Texas - More than 200 cards have been sent to senior living facilities in Williamson County as part of an outreach campaign called the "Wise Owls Initiative" created by Laura Jones.

"I want them to bring a smile to their face, I want them to be a constant reminder that somebody cares about them that they are recognized and are not just an old lady in a nursing home. You have a name, you're here and we want them to be recognized, and that's the reason for the handmade cards, it's more personal that way," said Jones.

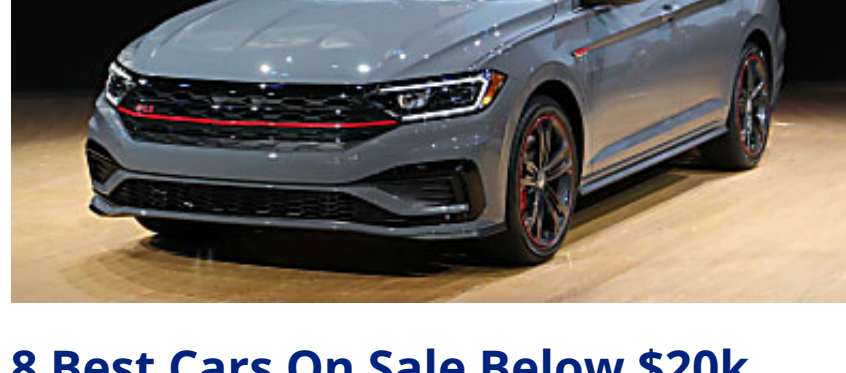
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To make the cards, Jones recruited her kids and organized a group of ten volunteers. Several are from the county Health District's Medical Reserve Corps. The district's coordinator Tim St. Peter helped get the project rolling, said Jones.

"Tim's wife and some of her students at her school made these cards and when you open it up it has a small little message," said Jones.

The group also schedules phone calls, and they have even done video birthday greetings.

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"I have a list of volunteers and I give them a time slot and say sign up for this time, or this time or this time, and we call one number and the Activities Director will place a resident on the telephone and switch them out every five to ten minutes," said Jones.

The Reserve at Georgetown, a memory care facility, recently received a batch of cards. The cards are disinfected before being handed out and provide a welcome escape from the seclusion done to prevent exposure to COVID-19.

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FOX 7 Discussion: Protecting nursing home populations

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"It's a real challenge, so when someone calls, and says hey we have this can we come and drop it off, and we are like, absolutely, I mean, please, help because this to us is like an activity that is sort of already done, but by volunteers," said Kimberly McQuaid.

McQuaid, the marketing director at The Reserve, told FOX 7 the cards are special because the residents recognize many were made by children.

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Jones is a registered nurse and has a background working with the geriatric community. She has seen the emotional damage that isolation can do to an older person. "I wanted to tap into something that was within them to help them to heal themselves," said Jones.

Jones says she wants to recruit more volunteers to make cards and hopes to be able to expand the initiative.

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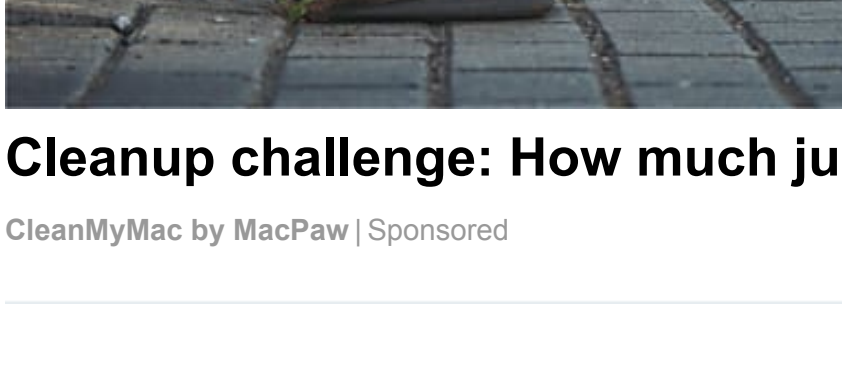
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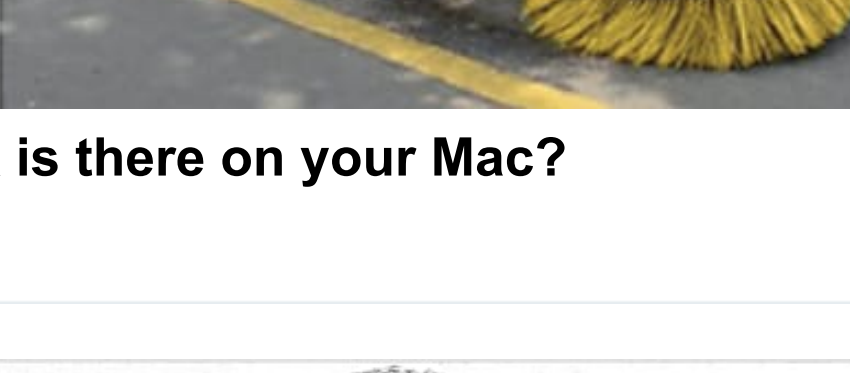
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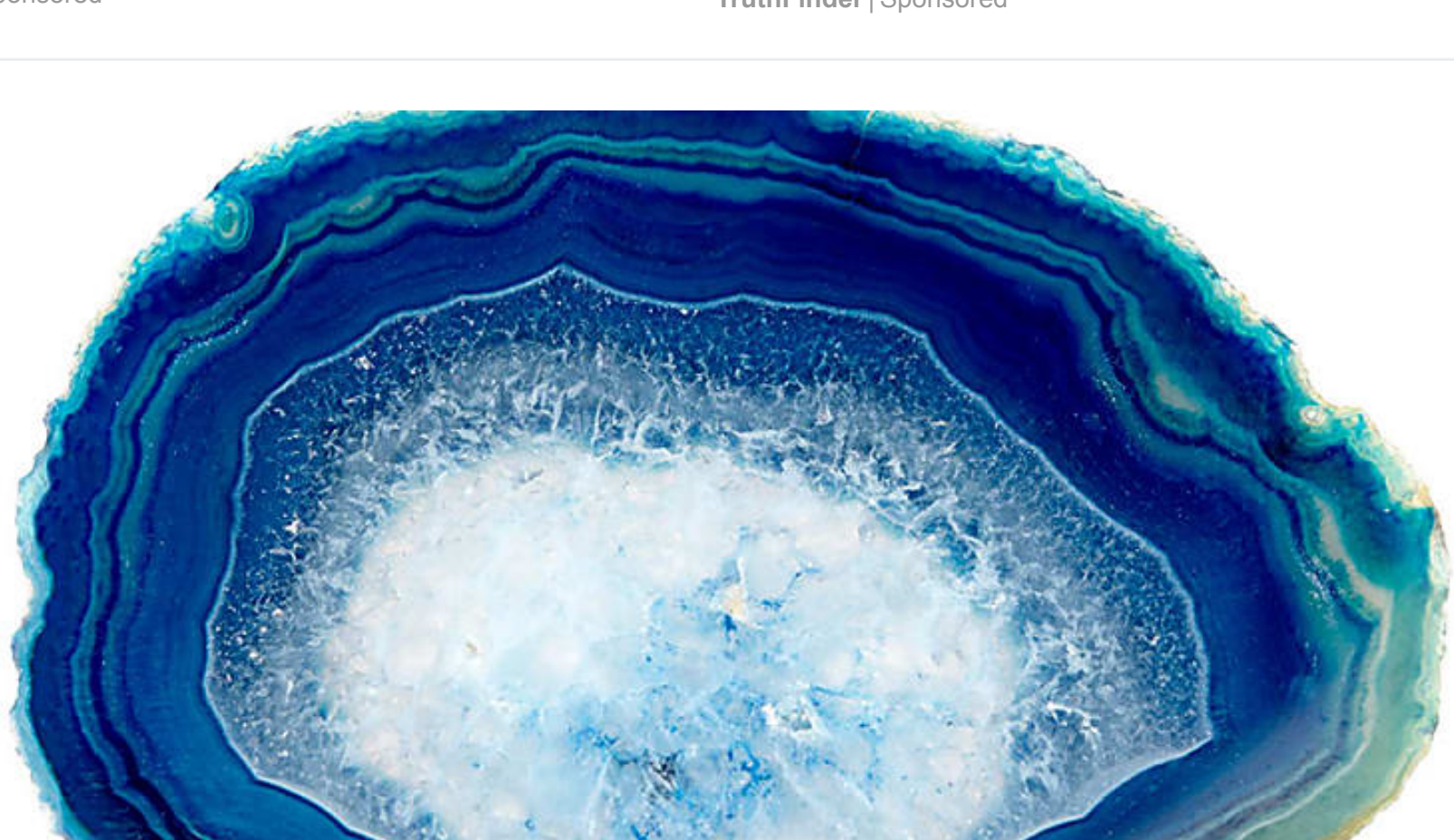
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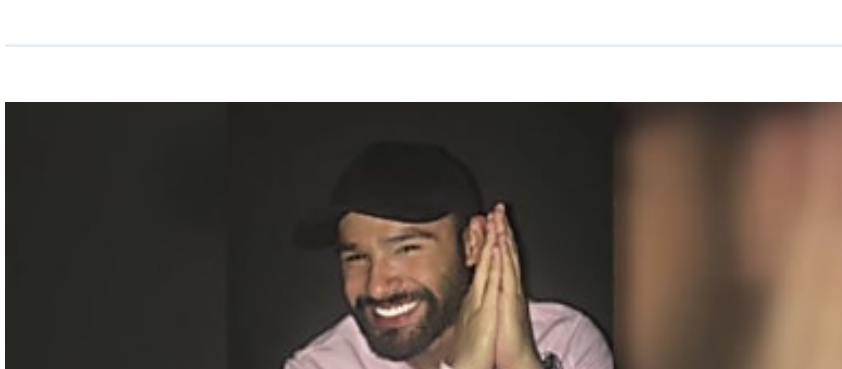
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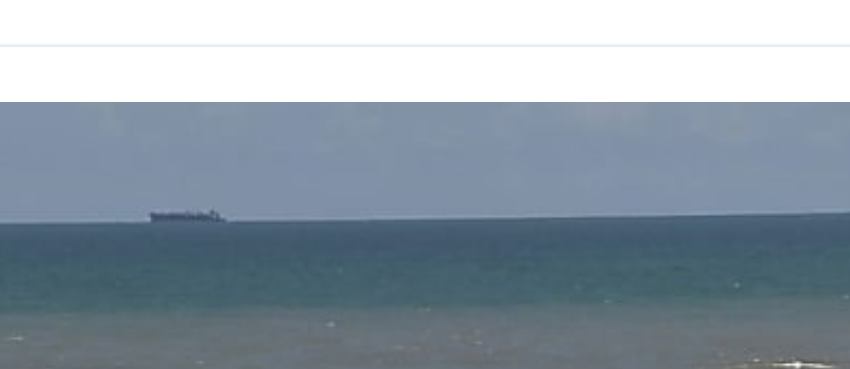


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