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First Baptist Church of Burleson's Promises Community Ministries Center was awarded the 2013 Jerry Allen Award for Excellence in Community Improvement. The presentation took place at the Oct. 21 city council meeting. The award has been given twice since 2008. It was created to honor then-outgoing council member Jerry Allen.

Where a small vacant white frame siding structure once stood at 140 N.W. Renfro St., First Baptist Church came in with a 5,998 square foot building that combines modern building techniques with architecture that features the early 20th century.

The award is presented to individuals, businesses, organizations or community groups whose efforts to improve Burleson are deemed extraordinary. The criteria includes incorporating sustainable development, new urban design principles in to new development, redevelopment or neighborhood rehabilitation project which significantly improves the aesthetic beauty of Burleson, outstanding landscaping, beautification projects which significantly contribute to the long-term beautification of Burleson, and other areas of community improvement.

In the award presentation, staff said that the construction of the new Promises Center significantly improved the Old Town area at the northwest end of Renfro Street and that the center consists of a period style architecture and location that creates aesthetic quality and value to the city.

The Promises Center had been located at the corner of Haskew and Ellison streets. After 10 years, more space was needed so through volunteer and contract labor the new location was built. The center includes an extensive food pantry and clothes closet. The center provides food, clothing and assistance with shelter-related expenses. Through the church's Christian Women's Job Corp Training Program, a group of people are selected each fall and spring for a semester-long intensive training to help introduce or re-introduce women in to the work force. Enrollment is free to the participant. Each participant is assigned a mentor and attends classes four days a week to learn computer literacy and office/professional development skills. With a staff of eight counselors, the Promises Center also provides counseling services to men, women, couples and children.