



NEWS

January 2025



Frying Turkeys with the Dawn Busters

Improving the world one child and one community at a time

LaMissTenn District of Kiwanis International:
10000 Celtic Drive, Suite 706, Baton Rouge, LA 70809

18



21



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ON THE COVER:

LaMissTenn Governor Claude Vinson volunteers at the Dawn Busters Kiwanis Turkey Fry. See more about the Turkey Fry on pages 3, 4 & 24.

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Season's Greetings Feedings

By Claude Vinson, Governor

Ah, yes, Christmas time; the most wonderful time of the year, a time for family, friends and songs of great cheer!

I'm not sure about you, but my "feeding" season begins around Halloween, indulging in appetizers of candy corn, mummy dogs, witchy fingers, followed by the bountiful Thanksgiving entrées and trimmings, the abundance of Christmas desserts and topped off by toasts of multiple libations to usher in the New Year.

A wonderful "sport" indeed, but nothing could have possibly prepared me for what I was about to experience at what is considered the World's Largest Turkey Fry sponsored by the Dawn Busters Kiwanis Club in Metairie, La. What a marvelous and amazing event! It was this year's goal to fry 1,050 turkeys, which were pre-ordered and distributed to those lucky enough to have

placed an order and picked up the day before Thanksgiving. In my life, never have I seen so many turkeys and the operation put in place by a great team of Kiwanians and Key Clubbers.

From the preparation of the turkeys, to the frying, to the packing, and then to the distribution, it was "all hands on deck". A type of co-operation which would have made the notorious Capt. Black Jack Joonie proud (Aarrg). Everything was used and nothing went to waste; even the turkey entrails were preserved to feed the lobster and crab traps.

Thank you to President BJ Kruse, Mike Haffner, Governor-Elect Marcel Lashover and the wonderful Dawn Busters members for the invite and making me feel welcome and part of the team! I certainly look forward to returning next year.

As I was driving back home, it dawned on me that feeding is more than what we put in our bellies. No, it means much, much more. For the money raised from that one event

will go to "feed" the hopes and dreams of the kids in that community with things they would not otherwise have access to, such as toys, bicycles, books, clothes, etc.

The great thing about Kiwanis is that we love to provide activities throughout the year which feeds the need, the soul, and renews the spirit of the kids in our communities to further reinforce that Kiwanis is indeed the greatest service organization in the world.

So, tis the season to lend a hand to help our human clan when you can, tis the season to feed hearts with compassion, comfort and joy, tis the season to feed the spirits of those who feel hopeless, and yes, tis the season to help feed those empty bellies of those who are less fortunate.

Happy Holidays and Season's Feedings! ☺

Be Your Invincible You,

Claude Vinson

2024-25 Governor

LaMissTN District



A Message from the Governor-Elect

By Marcel Lashover, Governor-Elect

Hello LaMissTenn Kiwanians,

First, I hope you and your family had a safe and awesome Thanksgiving but did not eat too much...lol!

What a busy few months of my 2024-2025 Governor-Elect year already with going to Kiwanis International in Indianapolis early in November for Governor training with the incoming governors from not only USA but from around the world. Our class had a lot of opportunities to network with each other and made a lot of new friends. Also, I had some time to meet with our International President Elect Michael Mulhaul (*pictured at top*).

On Wednesday, November 27th, my club, the Kiwanis Club of Dawn Busters, held our biggest fundraiser called “The Un-Official World’s Largest Tur-

key Fry” where we fried 1,050 Cajun Injected Turkeys. It was a sell out again! Thanks to LaMissTenn Governor Claude Vinson, Region 4 Trustee Jennifer Kelly White and LaMissTenn Executive Director Jen Robertson for coming out to help with between 150 and 200 members, Key Clubbers, and members from other Kiwanis Clubs. Also, thanks to the UNO Baseball Team and other volunteers, sponsors, local elected officials, and news media that love to come report and get involved. I can’t forget the Krewe of Carrollton men that have been our partners doing all the frying of the birds. Folks, this is a true community event that is all hands-on deck for the kids.

In the future, we hope you are inspired to help us grow the district by increasing and strengthening your club. Remember, you can do your part today by leaving a legacy of the younger members that will keep the light of



your club glowing for the kids and community we support.

If you need help, please reach out to any one of us including your Lt. Governors so we can just have a conversation. I can be reached through my email lamisstenngov2526@gmail.com or my cell at 504-272-1600. Thanks, and we are there for all of you.

Marcel Lashover
2024-2025 Governor-Elect





IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES

By Andrew Dozier, Vice Governor

Our Kiwanis Clubs work extremely hard to make a difference in our communities. Our members dedicate their time and service while balancing family and work. Your gratitude and partnership are appreciated.

Kiwanis is dedicated to Building, Nurturing, and Retaining. We achieve this through the collective efforts of passionate individuals like yourselves. To further our impact, we need to grow our membership base.

I challenge each club and its leadership to create a Club Membership Plan. The purpose is to help your Kiwanis Club acquire and retain members, by setting goals, creating actions to achieve those goals and creating metrics for the plan's success.

This is a priority we must take very seriously. We must engage with all members of the club and evaluate with regular updates on pro-

gress. Our club membership chair along with its board zoom monthly to effectively meet the challenges of retaining and recruiting membership growth.

I challenge all Kiwanis members to take charge of recruiting new members. Imagine the possibilities if we do the following:

- Participate in Two for Two
- Participate in Kiwanis Kompanions - Governor Claude's Tool
- Engage Key Clubbers after they graduate/or members of other Service Leadership Programs
- Engage former members by Re-Membering
- Invite guests to every club meeting/zoom
- Host a quarterly open house reception
- Recruit stakeholders in your community
- Host monthly membership drives
- Market your club (TV, Newspaper, Facebook, etc.)
- Ask people to join - all members should have Kiwanis membership applications in hand

These are tools and resources

we all hear about but are we effective in making it happen? We know the saying: "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail." "Plan your work for today and every day, then work your plan."

Let's have a contest within our clubs. Who can meet our club recruiting goals, create incentives, and recognize members? We must retain and grow our clubs today, tomorrow and in the future.

I am looking forward to visiting your clubs and assisting in club membership efforts. The leaders must lead, and the teams will follow.

Sustainability and attrition must be our focus to continue to meet our objectives in our clubs and communities. Thank you for all you do. I'm proud and honored to serve. I wish you and your families a joyous holiday season filled with love, happiness, and prosperity!

I Salute You!

Andrew Dozier

Vice-Governor

We Must Build, Nurture and Retain

By John Fry, Immediate Past Governor



Who remembers that old TV commercial for Faberge Organic Shampoo from the 1970s? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=brC_jK6stBs

It features a young lady who is talking about this wonderful product, and she mentions that she told two friends about this product, and they began using the shampoo because they loved it. Those two friends then told two more friends, and they began using the product and so on and so on and so on.

Imagine if we as Kiwanians follow that same concept and share our love of Kiwanis with two people or even just one person per year and bring them into the Kiwanis family. That might not seem like much of an impact - one person or two people per year but if you think about a club size of twenty for instance if every member of that club

introduced a new member that club could then potentially have forty members by the end of the year. Then imagine if the next year those 40 members brought in one person per year. The club could then potentially have eighty and so on and so on.

I realize these numbers seem a bit outlandish, but you can see the principle of the idea. If we love what we do as Kiwanians, why wouldn't we share that with someone else and allow them to enjoy the same joy of service that we experience every day? You may be thinking my club is fine the way it is. I like all the members in my club. We do the things I like to do. We are doing fine. Think about five years down the road or ten years. We must continually be looking to perpetuate the service to our com-

munity through the members of our club not just for now, not just for next year but for the next generation.

We have all worked too hard to make our clubs and the service that we provide relevant to the communities that we live in and work in to be content with our current club dynamics. Please join me in supporting Kiwanis International and Governor Claude's initiative to build, nurture and retain this year. Reach out to a club member that you have not seen in a while to re-engage with them. Ask someone to join you for a meeting or a service project or fundraiser. Wear the Kiwanis brand proudly and be willing to share it with anyone at any time.

Yours in service?

The Immediate Past Gov

BUILD.
NURTURE.
RETAIN.

January 2025 Check-In

Register Now!



2025 Mid-Year Education Conference

March 22nd ★ Natchez, MS

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Natchez Convention Center • 211 Main St, Natchez MS 39120



Help new members transition to engaged long-term members! Check out Governor Claude's new tool [Kiwanis Kompanions](#).



Signature PROJECT CONTEST

Does your club have a signature project?

Even if you answered no, we bet you do! Check out the rules and make your project known by submitting to the [Kiwanis Signature Project Contest](#)! The Contest will start accepting entries on **January 7, 2025** with a submission deadline of **January 30, 2025**.

CELEBRATING SUPERHEROES OF SERVICE

LAMISSTENN DCON AUGUST 8-10, 2025



★ HILTON MEMPHIS ★
939 RIDGE LAKE BLVD.
MEMPHIS, TN 38120

WWW.LAMISSTENN.ORG



reMember 80!

Governor Claude has set a goal to reMember 80 former Kiwanis members before District Convention. The Kiwanis reMembering Program encourages clubs to reconnect with former members or members who have become inactive.

WELCOME TO THE KIWANIS FAMILY!

Reflects new membership from 9/27/24 to 12/27/24.

Susan Adam, <i>Moisant</i>	Virginia Gomez, <i>Southwest Louisiana</i>	Kalli Parr, <i>Dyersburg</i>
Kimberlee Alexander, <i>Pascagoula</i>	Charles Graham, <i>Grenada</i>	Boni Pater, <i>Ascension</i>
Gillian Allen, <i>Thibodaux</i>	Donna Gray, <i>Vicksburg</i>	Troy Pater, <i>Ascension</i>
Carla Alsup, <i>Amory</i>	Jermal Greenberry, <i>Pontchartrain</i>	Richard Petie, <i>Moisant</i>
Karen Bachemin, <i>Greater Covington</i>	Deborah Guedry, <i>Ascension</i>	Annabelle Picard, <i>Biloxi</i>
Shelia Bailey, <i>Pontchartrain</i>	Reyna Harris, <i>Big Easy</i>	Trudie Pollard, <i>Lake Charles</i>
Aristides Baraya, <i>Hammond</i>	Alvin Harrison, <i>Pontchartrain</i>	Danielle Powell, <i>Long Beach</i>
Timothy Baudier, <i>Dawn Busters</i>	Clayton Hebert, <i>Cortana</i>	Glen Powell, <i>Long Beach</i>
Pam Black, <i>Pascagoula</i>	Sara Hernandez, <i>Moisant</i>	Jeffrey Powell, <i>Alexandria</i>
Heather Borne, <i>Moisant</i>	Amanda Hobson, <i>Jackson</i>	Tylor Quebedeaux, <i>Lake Charles</i>
Jason Bossier, <i>Laurel</i>	Melissa Holifield, <i>Lucedale</i>	Josh Randall, <i>East Livingston</i>
Brad Boutwell, <i>Greater Ouachita</i>	Jennifer Holly, <i>Vicksburg</i>	Ryan Randall, <i>St. Bernard-Arabi</i>
Kelly Boyd, <i>Gulfport</i>	Tarlisha Hudson, <i>Natchitoches</i>	Vaydra Reeves, <i>Leesville</i>
Michelle Broussard, <i>Carencro</i>	Richard Hux, <i>Covington County</i>	Ishoun Roane, <i>Big Easy</i>
Missy Broussard, <i>Greater Covington</i>	Valerie Johnson, <i>Big Easy</i>	Robert Rodgers, <i>Greater Ouachita</i>
Burton Chandler, <i>Dyersburg</i>	Andrea Kemper, <i>Jackson</i>	Jerry Rogers, <i>Pearl</i>
Chasity Cheramie, <i>Thibodaux</i>	Abbey King, <i>Vicksburg</i>	Ryan Roy, <i>St. Bernard-Arabi</i>
Vince Cheramie, <i>Thibodaux</i>	George King, <i>Gulfport</i>	Teresa Saxton, <i>Moisant</i>
Marigaye Cooper, <i>Vicksburg</i>	Stephen Ladaban, <i>Gulfport</i>	Madison Seaford, <i>Sulphur</i>
Melissa Corass, <i>Moisant</i>	Jessica Lahaie, <i>Gulfport</i>	Brian Shollmier, <i>Big Easy</i>
Denee Cox, <i>Walker</i>	Alisha Landry, <i>Ascension</i>	Caitlin Shollmier, <i>Big Easy</i>
Georgia Craven, <i>Sabine</i>	Jacob Landry, <i>Lafayette</i>	Victoria Smith, <i>Walker</i>
John Craven, <i>Sabine</i>	Kay Landry, <i>East Livingston</i>	Arian Sorkhabi, <i>Big Easy</i>
Michael Crews, <i>Rankin County</i>	Robert Landry, <i>Greater Ouachita</i>	Joseph Stevens, <i>Sabine</i>
Lauri-An Croston, <i>Moisant</i>	John Lange, <i>Northshore Mandeville</i>	Ian Strother, <i>Big Easy</i>
Bill Cruse, <i>Picayune</i>	Gerald Lantrip, <i>Amory</i>	Roslyn Sutton, <i>Greenville</i>
Isabella Cuevas, <i>Algiers</i>	Hayes Larry, <i>Big Easy</i>	Julie Taylor, <i>Algiers</i>
Oscar Davis, <i>Vicksburg</i>	Lauryn Lee, <i>Moisant</i>	Steven Theall, <i>Greater Covington</i>
Perry Davis III, <i>Kenner North</i>	Lance Leone, <i>Sabine</i>	Daena Trahan, <i>Lake Charles</i>
Mary Deblanc, <i>Algiers</i>	Kelly Lewis, <i>DeRidder</i>	Alexa Trischler, <i>Algiers</i>
Brenna Desormeaux, <i>Carencro</i>	Katie Long, <i>Dawn Busters</i>	Caden Turner, <i>Denham Springs</i>
Eric Diggs, <i>Big Easy</i>	Michelle Luquette, <i>Acadiana-Lafayette</i>	Andrew Peyton Umfress, <i>Tupelo</i>
Glenn Dixon, <i>Moisant</i>	Scott Maggio, <i>Natchitoches</i>	Toby Vicknair, <i>Opelousas</i>
Beth Dixon, <i>Moisant</i>	Joshua McAllister, <i>Winnfield</i>	Bubba Villarrubia, <i>Moisant</i>
Chris Dominique, <i>Ponchatoula</i>	Joshua McGee, <i>Lake Charles</i>	Deborah Ward-Crosby, <i>Pontchartrain</i>
Jessi Dominique, <i>Ponchatoula</i>	Kristi McKinney, <i>Kenner North</i>	Shelia Washington, <i>Greenville</i>
Leah Doyle, <i>Amory</i>	Joseph McMahan, <i>Dawn Busters</i>	Lacey Watson, <i>Vicksburg</i>
Brendon Dubroc, <i>Alexandria</i>	Christy Meaux, <i>Moisant</i>	Deanne Webb, <i>Big Easy</i>
Lisa Dugal, <i>Northshore Mandeville</i>	Pat Menard, <i>Bayou Teche</i>	James Welch, <i>DeRidder</i>
Britney Duke, <i>Hammond</i>	Carol Mendel, <i>Moisant</i>	Michelle White, <i>Cortana</i>
Trevor Dunlap, <i>Walker</i>	Amanda Mones, <i>St. Bernard-Arabi</i>	Jessie Whitley, <i>Greenville</i>
Ethan Dupas, <i>St. Bernard-Arabi</i>	Clint Myers, <i>Dyersburg</i>	Bruce Williams, <i>Acadiana-Lafayette</i>
Lori Dupuis, <i>Opelousas</i>	Linda Myrick, <i>Leesville</i>	Chris Williams, <i>Walker</i>
Jimmy Dupuis, <i>Bayou Teche</i>	Ana Nanney, <i>Houma</i>	Gloria Williams, <i>Big Easy</i>
Rachel Falgout, <i>Acadiana-Lafayette</i>	David Nardini, <i>Pineville</i>	Mitchell Williams, <i>Pascagoula</i>
Cody Fecke, <i>Greater Covington</i>	Lia Oakley, <i>Germantown</i>	Valerie Willman, <i>East Livingston</i>
Tom Filo, <i>Calcasieu</i>	Grant Ordoyne, <i>Thibodaux</i>	Cheryl Wooley, <i>Sabine</i>
Cathy Galley, <i>Greater Covington</i>	Stephanie Packer, <i>Pascagoula</i>	Miranda Zachary, <i>Opelousas</i>
Willie Gasper, <i>Port City</i>	Angel Papadimitriou, <i>Southwest La.</i>	

NEW PARTNERSHIP GETS YOU PAID TO SPEND TIME WITH FRIENDS!

Grouper connects you with social fitness benefits in your health plan.

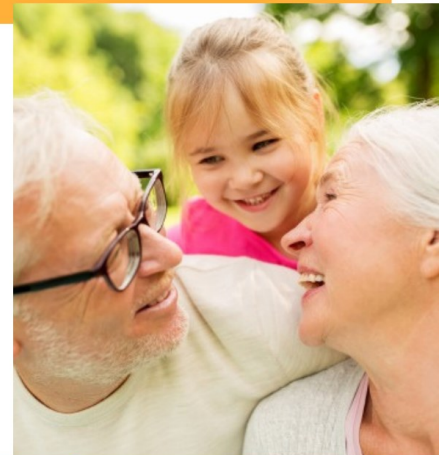
Eligible participants 65+ with qualifying plans can receive a check in the mail, recognizing your passion as beneficial to health.

Check eligibility at GrouperGroups.com/lmwtkiwanis, and let tonight be on your health plan.

Today is on your Health Plan



Grouper works with your health plan to pay you to enjoy time with friends!



PROUD TO BE INCLUDED IN:



One Pass



KIWANIS CONVENTION PITTSBURGH

Registration is NOW open for Kiwanis International Convention (ICON) June 25-28, 2025 in Pittsburgh, PA! The LaMissTenn District will be staying in the Drury Plaza Hotel. If you plan to attend, you are encouraged to secure your hotel reservations early before the room block is filled. For more information and registration click [HERE](#).

FORGE *the* FUTURE

Kiwanis
CONVENTION 2025
PITTSBURGH

JUNE 25-28

GRANTS, GRANTS, & MORE GRANTS!

Visit www.LaMissTenn.org for details



NEW CLUB COMMUNITY *grants* Service



Community Service Grants

Gold Grants (up to \$5,000)

- Awarded twice per year (deadlines: February 1st & July 1st)
- 75% reimbursement of award

Silver Grants (up to \$2,000)

- Awarded monthly (until funding is depleted)
- 75% reimbursement of award



SLP Grant Program: Growing the K Family

Kiwanis
Service Leadership Programs

AED Grants

Disaster Relief Fund

Kiwanis

LaMissTenn Foundation



Key Club & Circle K Scholarship Programs

The LaMissTenn District Foundation offers scholarships to Key Club seniors and Circle K members.

All eligible are invited to complete and submit an application.

Scholarship Applications are now open with a **deadline of 11:59pm on January 31, 2025!**

Targeted emails have been sent to all Key Club and Circle K Kiwanis and Faculty Advisors.

Please help spread the word and encourage applications by following up with your Key Clubs and Circle K Clubs!

Kiwanis
LaMissTenn Foundation

Key Club & Circle K Scholarship Programs

About Scholarship

The LaMissTenn District Foundation offers scholarships to:

- ✓ Senior Key Club members &
- ✓ Circle K members.

How to Apply

Applications open Nov 1, 2024 on the website, www.lamisstenn.org.

Applications must be submitted online.

Applications due **by 11:59pm on Jan 31, 2025.**

More Information

☎ 225-769-9233

🌐 www.lamisstenn.org

the POSSIBILITY PROJECT



THE POSSIBILITY PROJECT UPDATE

By Lenny Simmons, Kiwanis Children's Fund District Chair

As we begin 2025, I wanted to give you an update on the Possibility Project. As of December 1, 2024, the Kiwanis Children's Fund has raised \$6,161,682.23 in gifts and pledges. Currently, our District has raised \$90,160.28 in gifts and pledges. The Children's Fund goal is to raise US\$25 million to help 10 million children over the next 5 years. It is the first fundraising campaign created solely to support Kiwanis Clubs locally and worldwide and the children we help through Club service projects.

Impact Clubs

Our District has only one club that has signed up to be an Impact Club so far. I would like to congratulate my home club, the Kiwanis Club of New Orleans, for making the decision to be an Impact Club. With a commitment to give a per member average of US\$500 or more over five years, your Club too can become an

Impact Club. The funds pledged by your Club will take in consideration any funds that your Club had already contributed to the Children's Fund or any Club member who had donated to KCF retroactively to the 2022-23 administrative year beginning October 1, 2022. So, you see, your Club has already started with this commitment. If you need to know how much your Club has already contributed, please contact me. Also, if your Club agrees to become an Impact Club and signs the agreement to participate, your Club's membership number for calculating purposes is frozen at the date of signing no matter how many new members you add to your roster in the future.

I know that not every Club will be able to become an Impact Club, but whatever your Club can afford to give will be greatly appreciated.

Kiwanis Children's Fund Champions

I am still looking for a few more Kiwanians to volunteer to become Kiwanian Children's Fund Champions. So, if you truly believe in the Possibility Project join me in spreading the word to our Clubs.

If you have questions about the Possibility Project, your Club becoming an Impact Club or information about becoming a Children's Fund Champion please contact me at leonarddsimmons@cox.net.

When sending in your contribution, please make your Club's check payable to the Kiwanis Children's Fund and mail to: Kiwanis Children's Fund, P.O. Box 6457 – Dept. # 286, Indianapolis, IN 46206. You can also pay online by going to Kiwanis.org and go to the Kiwanis Children's Fund tab. Consider the Possibilities!


**10
MILLION KIDS**


US\$25 MILLION


5 YEARS

LET'S BUILD OUR BRAND!

By Donna Leggett, LaMissTenn District Public Relations Chair



Have you been using social media to help build your brand? With one quarter of the Kiwanis year already behind us, now is the perfect time to evaluate how social media is working for your club. When is the last time you looked at your professional dashboard on your club Facebook page? This is a valuable tool to get a read on the success of your page. I like to look at the page overview and see how many people our posts reach and just how many people engage in each post. It is interesting to see which type of content gets the most engagement and, even a bit deeper, how many new page likes we can pick up with just the right photo.

Do you know your audience? It's as easy as clicking "audience" under professional dashboard and you can see the gender and age groups of your audience. You can try new types of posts to see if you can

reach a different target age group that may seem low. It is helpful to see which surrounding towns are engaged in your page.

Take a look at your post engagement section. There you will see how many people each post actually reached and how many people responded with a like or comment. This area will give you the best example of what type of posts will get a reaction. If you see that a certain type of post just isn't working, try something new.

I encourage you to accept the weekly challenge on Facebook. This will assist you in gaining new skills, building your audience and growing as a creator each week. The challenge is as simple as - get 5 new followers, publish five public posts, publish five public reels and, if you have an Instagram account, set up your page to automatically share your posts to Instagram. Increasing your followers is as easy as asking your own members to invite friends to like and follow your page. Ask your members to like and comment. You will notice a trend in your post

engagements. Be sure to post action photos and not the same group photos as always. Followers enjoy seeing what you are doing and it helps them to understand why we do what we do. When your friends see how much fun you are having serving the children in your community, they will want to join you.

As always, I am here as a resource for you. Feel free to contact me if I can assist you in starting a new Facebook page or if you need help with your existing page.

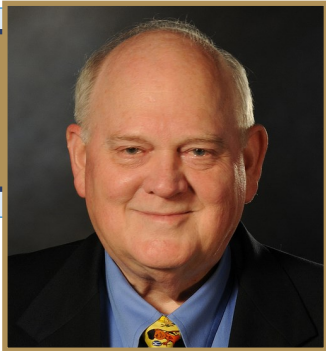
Together we can Build Our Brand in LaMissTenn!

Donna Leggett

DonnaL100@yahoo.com

225-315-2818





Aspire to Inspire: WHERE DID THE TIME GO?

By James A. "Jeems" White, III, Past Governor

How many times have you heard and said that expression? Where did the time go? The meaning intended is that something seemed to happen faster than you perceived or that you wanted. The reality is that time is a fixed scientific fact. There are atomic clocks that calculate time extremely accurately, for example, the National Institute of Standards cesium fountain clock measures time with an uncertainty of 1 second in 300 million years! We won't even go into the definition of a second, a minute, an hour, a day, a year.

There is no speed of time, because time doesn't move. The term 'time' describes our motion through the temporal dimension. It is only our perception of the "passage of time" (i.e. our motion through the temporal dimension) that gives us the emotional feeling of fast, slow or normal speed of time. If one is bored, the motion/passage seems slow. If one is enjoying something, the motion/passage is perceived to be fast, i.e., "Where did the time go?"

It gets more complicated than

that. Consider our individual perception of our individual "motion through the temporal dimension." A five-year-old might say, "Are we there yet? Are we there yet?" implying a trip is slow and taking too long while the parents or grandparents might know and feel that the same journey is a quick trip. Why is that?

It is related to the volume of time-memory in the brain of the individual, i.e., the time experience stored by the individual. A year is more than twenty percent of a five-year-old's life awareness while a year is only two percent of a fifty-year-old's time-memory. The individual human perception of time is related to the portion or percentage of one's total memory banks.

If you are over fifty, you should immediately understand this.... and as "time passes" that percentage of your time-memory gets smaller and smaller so that each increment of the temporal dimension appears and feels faster..... and you exclaim, "Where did the time go?"

All that said as a preamble, it explains why when I received the email from Tiffany requesting articles, it "seemed like only yesterday" since I wrote the KICKOFF

ANKY article for the start of the new Kiwanis year. As you read this the holidays are past and it is 2025, the calendar new year. That is 25% of the Kiwanis year gone, gone, gone. Did you get done, done, done what you intended to do, do, do for the children we serve?

Hey, we all enjoyed the holidays and most of us maybe ate too much, watched TV too much, drank too much? etc. (whatever "too much" is) ... but that's why New Year's Resolutions were invented. Interestingly, time rears its head here again. It's not that maybe we did too much of this, that or the other ... it's that we did not do well-intentioned things, i.e., didn't "spend enough time" accomplishing various goals. New year's resolutions are to renew our resolve to work on those goals. Have you included Kiwanis service to children in your new year's resolutions? You know the thing. The tune and the drumbeats have not changed. There is so much to do and "so little time." Happy New Year to you and to all those children whose lives we improve. Aspire to inspire those children.... and have so much fun serving children this year that next fall you will say, WHERE DID THE TIME GO?



Key Leader North

By Linda Ramsey,
Key Leader North Administrator

Calling on all High School Students, both in Key Club or not, ages 14-18 and students who are in the 8th grade and will be going into the 9th grade in the Fall of 2025! Kiwanis Key Leader is a weekend leadership experience for students of high school age who would like to enhance their leadership skills. The weekend involves both small and large group hands-on activities where you learn to work as a team to solve problems and find solutions. You will also make life-long friends within a couple of days during this experience. Kids need Kiwanis, and Kids need Key Leader!

Kiwanis friends, please ask high school students that you know whether they come from church groups, scouts, 4-H, any youth organizations, home school children, children and grandchildren of your family and friends, etc. to attend. This experience is such an awesome one for any one of any age.

I've had adults, who have come as chaperones, tell me that they

have changed over this weekend experience, because it gives you a chance to both observe and reflect on positive changes in attitude, commitment, and values. Volunteer to be a chaperone and see for yourselves. This experience is free for adults other than paying for the cost of a Kiwanis background check which is \$30 and is good for 2 years. If you don't have the time of your life, I promise to buy you lunch sometime. This truly has been one of the most rewarding opportunities I've ever had to serve children as a member of Kiwanis. CHECK IT OUT!!

Registration will be open for Kiwanis Key Leader North in January 2025, and our website address is www.wtnkeyleader.org. You can register as a chaperone, a student facilitator (you should have attended one Key Leader Event to serve in this role) or a regular student participant. If someone wants to attend, but doesn't have the finances, please tell them to contact me to see about a scholarship or a sponsorship. No child should miss this opportunity because of finances. Email me or call me if you have questions, mramsey2@utm.edu or (731) 225-7729. If you would like materials to share with students,

contact me, and we can send you a brochure that you can print and distribute to the children and their parents. For more information, you can visit the Kiwanis International website, www.key-leader.org where you will find promotional resources to print and send home with the students for their parents to look over. Truly, you do not want to miss this!!



Newly formed Hamilton Key Club Promotes Leadership and Service

By Ray Van Dusen, Monroe Journal, December 19, 2024

“Our whole view is community service. It’s not based on grades, it’s based on things you want to do to give back to your community,” said sponsor Sylvia Faulkner, who described the club as the young people’s version of the Kiwanis Club. “What I’m most proud of is all 75 of our members have been paired with a struggling elementary student. They’re like big brothers and big sisters with them. They eat lunch or breakfast with them and check on their progress and they’re reading to their classes.” She added students can use participation as a means to earn community service hours and for scholarship applications. “I think one of the most important things we’ve done is give the teachers somebody to ask for help. You can always ask for other teachers to help with things around the school and always know there are certain students you can ask. Now, the teachers know they have 75 students they know they can look to whenever they need somebody to help them in the classroom to talk to the students, read books, mop their floor, work the concession stand at games or clean the stands,” said Key Club President Kaylee Joslin.

The recent donation to the infusion center was sparked during Breast Cancer Awareness Month with an idea of giving back. Key Club members raised money at football games and sold com-



Luke Johnson and Sherrie Jones of Columbus' infusion center accept a check from members of the Hamilton High School Key Club. The club raised funds through donations and T-shirt sales to benefit the center.

memorative T-shirts with the names of people who overcame breast cancer in the Hamilton community. “Our cancer patients appreciate anything like this that people do. We know you put in a lot of hard work and we appreciate it. A lot of people have to miss work, so their incomes are reduced. We try to give gas cards to some of the patients who meet certain criteria. Some of the treatment patients drive every day for 45 days in a row 30 miles one way and 30 miles back,” said Sherrie Jones of the infusion center.

The Key Club also built and installed a lending library on campus. “Before Key Club, my church went to the Salvation Army and gave away food once a month. This has inspired me to reach out to more. I got my youth group into

going to a children’s center in Tupelo called Faith Haven. We minister to them and spend time with them and give them food,” said Madison Jones, the 12th-grade delegate for the club.

Joslin is affiliated with several other community service projects and said Key Club is a great community outreach, especially for her age group. “After the first three weeks that school started, I started talking to the other members and one of them said, ‘I feel like since we started this, I feel like a community,’” she said. Faulkner said since the club was implemented, school spirit has also increased.

The newly formed **Hamilton Key Club** is sponsored by the **Kiwanis Club of Starkville**.

Cortana Sponsors Key Clubbers for Key Leader

By Wanda Magee, Cortana Kiwanis Club



Representatives from **Helix Mentorship STEAM Academy Key Club** attended a **Cortana Kiwanis Club** meeting one Thursday morning. Key Club President Nadia Charles did an excellent job presiding over the entire Cortana meeting. Helix Principal Dr. Angela Domingue thanked Cortana Kiwanis Club for investing in the students, for the support given to students and for the opportunities for service and leadership. Cortana President Patricia Anderson presented a Kiwanis Club of Cortana Baton Rouge Foundation, Inc. grant check for \$1,000 to Sgt. Jerrod Webb and Nadia to enable 4 students to attend Key Leader Weekend in November.

Germantown Aktion Club Takes Action!

By Linda Fisher, Germantown Kiwanis

The **Germantown Adult Aktion Club at Madonna Learning Center** started off the year electing new officers. Speeches and voting brought together some great leaders that were installed as officers.

The first project of the year had members making 300 bologna and cheese sandwiches for St. Mary's Mission. It was a wonderful team effort to put the sandwiches together to make a difference for those who are in need of food.

Veterans Day was recognized by the Aktion Club with a veteran speaking about what it means to be a veteran and serving our country. Cards were then made for the veteran's organization "Forever Young".

Finishing out the year, the club is collecting food for the Ronald McDonald House at St. Jude Hospital.



Aktion Club Members Give Thanks

By Judy Couvillion, Aktion Club Administrator

At a meeting in early November, members of the **Hammond Kiwanis Aktion Club** made Thanksgiving cards that were later presented to the elderly patrons at the Hammond volunteer Council on Aging Center. Using construction paper, stickers, colored pens and their own imagination the Aktion clubbers eagerly took on the task of making the cards. Each card was a special effort on the part of an Aktion Club member and reflected how they felt about sharing the spirit of Thanksgiving with others. The exercise also sharpened the creative skills of the Aktion Club members.



Teaching Aktion Club Members New Skills

By Judy Couvillion, Aktion Club Administrator

Hammond Kiwanis Club members, always searching for ways to educate the **Hammond Kiwanis Aktion Club** members, called on Kiwanian Ed Gautier to present a session on knot tying. Utilizing his years of experience with the Boy Scouts of America, Gautier led a session on knot tying that the Aktion Club members thoroughly enjoyed. Gautier led the group through the details of tying many different knots that are utilized in various ways. The Hammond Aktion Club meets twice monthly and a group of Kiwanians always find ways to bring interesting and educational programs to the Aktion clubbers. An Aktion Club member is invited to the Kiwanis club's weekly meetings where they are afforded the opportunity to meet with club members, enjoy lunch alongside their sponsoring club members and hear a great speaker.



K-Kids Elves Sprinkle Christmas Joy!

By Don Eye, LaMissTenn District K-Kids Administrator

This is my favorite time of the year. As a Kiwanian having the fortunate duty of managing our club's younger Service Leadership Programs, this time of year is filled with much excitement.

The first task was playing secret Santa at school by releasing our K-Kids Elves to clean teacher's home rooms. Hope they did not erase the homework assignments!

Our most important and a personal favorite of mine was to volunteer our sorting skills for the Memphis Food Bank. Over 200,000 square feet of food storage all around the K-Kids! We started with an empty box and as the box moved down the conveyer system each pair of K-Kids placed items in the box. Items were strategically positioned to fill the box completely.



The next event was our Mitten Tree project. We had one tree a few years ago, but now there are five trees throughout the school. Each tree is decorated with new hats, gloves, fuzzy socks, and scarves. The last day of school before the kids go on holiday break, Kiwanis delivers the clothes to the school for the students. It is an

emotional moment when the kids realize they are going home with something new for the cold weather ahead. Their principle, Dr Louis Padgett III, was recognized years ago for his unique management skills with making every child achieve greatness and self-esteem. Today he was front and center thanking Kiwanis for the project. Many of Germantown's Municipal School teachers first learned their trade under Dr Padgett.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS
EVERYONE!!!**

Don Eye

District K-Kids Administrator
(901) 494-7496



Don Eye, Dr. Padgett, Paddy Harris, and Zelle Eye deliver Germantown K-Kids mitten tree items to Northaven Elementary



The Food Bank Volunteers!



A rare breed of reindeer!



Terrific Kids!

Algiers Gives Back to the Community

By Linda Leger, Algiers Kiwanis Club

JOEY'S HOPE

The Kiwanis Club of Algiers partnered up with Joey's Hope and has now turned one meeting a month into a project meeting. Joey's Hope NOLA was established in 2011 by Theresa Bovia after Teresa's son, USMC Sgt. Joseph Bovia, paid the ultimate sacrifice while serving in Afghanistan. Joey's legacy is kept alive by serving and providing for local children in need through Joey's Hope NOLA.

Bovia packs bags of food for distribution to two local schools on the Westbank in Algiers, Calvary Baptist and Harriet Tubman. The social workers at the school identify children in need of the food and make sure they get properly distributed.

Not only is this project supported by Kiwanis members but our Edna Karr, AOL & Shaw High School Key Clubbers support it as well. Food item stations are set up, each worker gets a bag and proceeds to each station filling the bag with mac & cheese, fruit cups, granola bars, etc. As many as 200 bags are delivered, making sure the kids have something to eat on weekends.

KEEP ALGIERS BEAUTIFUL

Keep Algiers Beautiful "KAB" is the official local affiliate to the statewide organization, Keep Louisiana Beautiful, which, in turn is the state affiliate to Keep America Beautiful. KAB operates as a board approved service committee of Kiwanis Algiers. Organized within the bylaws of Kiwanis Algiers, the founding committee of KAB was comprised of Algiers Kiwanians, Stephen Mosgrove, Evans Thibodeaux, Suzette Wilkinson, and Shirley Spedale in the Summer of 2022 after a Spring application and interview process with Keep Louisiana resulted in acceptance into its Affiliate program. The time that the Kiwanians put into this effort is extensive. Each clean up, although branded as a power hour, is essentially a 2 hour activity. Plantings are 3-4 hours each, and spread out throughout the city of Algiers. Since 2023 KAB has executed 18 clean



ups, one tree planting in an underserved section of Algiers, a major planting in Algiers Triangle Park, and distributed 400 vehicle litter bags. In October, Kiwanian Stephen Mosgrove accepted a 2024 Circle of Excellence Award from Keep Louisiana Beautiful on behalf of KAB which he has chaired since KAB's start.



Ascension Kiwanis Starts the Year off Right!

By Tiffany LaPorte & Donna Leggett, Ascension Kiwanis Club

From Halloween to the Holiday Season, and everything in between, **Ascension Kiwanis** has been busy! Starting in October, the Kiwanis Club of Ascension partnered with 10/31 Consortium to conduct a Halloween Costume Giveaway in Donaldsonville for our Kiwanis One Day project. Hundreds of area children picked out costumes and each family received a two pound bag of candy to pass out on



Halloween night. Club members also served at the Arc of East Ascension's Fourth Annual Trunk or Treat! There were plenty of sweets, costumes and fun for over six hundred little pumpkins!

The Kiwanis Club of Ascension doesn't hesitate to answer calls for service. On October 25th, club members

volunteered at the registration table for the Bluff Ridge Primary Mother/Son Glow Bingo Night. We love serving our community's children! Members also volunteered in support of the Kiwanis Club of Baton Rouge Pancake Festival celebrating 75 years of serving pancakes.

On World Kindness Day, Ascension Kiwanis helped spread kindness with Volunteers of America South Central Louisiana by contributing to their STUFFED WITH LOVE Thanksgiving Meal Kit Drive. And jumping right into the holiday season, the club's monthly collaboration with Brave Heart Louisiana's Children in Need project involved wrapping Christmas gifts for foster care children. On December 4th, our members had the privilege of serving as Santa's Elves at St. Vincent de Paul's 2024 Sylvia's Toys for Christmas project, wrapping and bagging gifts for one hundred deserving children in our area. Gifts will be distributed to children in St. Vincent de Paul programs and needy children in the area.

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Greenville Spreads Christmas Cheer

By Angela Crooms, Greenville Kiwanis Club

The Kiwanis Club of Greenville partnered with Warren-Washington-Issaquena-Sharkey Community Action Agency (WWISCAA) to help ensure all children can open a gift on Christmas morning. Households wishing to participate in the Angel Tree program completed a form located at the WWISCAA office with the names, ages, gender, and interests of children under 18 in the home. Our Service Committee chairperson, Britt Virden, went to WWISCAA on November 15th and received 15 angels. Each member that received an angel shopped for the children based on the information printed on the tag they selected. On December 17th the gifts were delivered to WWISCAA just in time for Christmas. This was an opportunity for Kiwanis of Greenville to not only help families in need, but it also gave everyone a chance to give back and there is no better feeling during the holidays than knowing that you have helped bring the magic of Christmas to a child.



From (L to R): Roslyn Sutton, Maxcean Lawton, Janet Wells, Sheila Washington, Katrina Davenport, Jessie Whitley, Britt Virden, Jan Vaughn, Gerald Husband, Chad Neal and seated Jasmine Styles.

Ascension Kiwanis Starts the Year off Right Continued . . .

By Tiffany LaPorte & Donna Leggett, Ascension Kiwanis Club



Cortana Kiwanis Cares

By Wanda Magee, Cortana Kiwanis Club



THANKSGIVING MEALS

For forty-seven years, **Cortana Kiwanians** have enjoyed a favorite tradition of providing Thanksgiving meals to families in our community.

We were thankful to have the opportunity to gather and deliver food boxes to twenty-six families. Each family received two boxes of food that included staples as well as food to assist them in making a filling Thanksgiving meal. The family names were provided by Istrouma Coach Sid Edwards.

Thanks to the Cortana Kiwanis members who volunteered to deliver the food, load the boxes and those who donated funds towards the cost of a Thanksgiving meal.

Our delivery teams relayed that this year's deliveries were very rewarding experiences. Coaches from Istrouma



High joined the delivery teams and it was apparent that they care very much about their students and the students' families. These families are truly in need and were very appreciative of our help.

AED PRESENTATION

Thursday, November 7, Magnolia Woods Elementary School Literacy Coach Claire Johnson was presented an AED machine from Cortana Kiwanis Club by AED Chairwoman Pam Morgan & Past President Patricia Anderson.



TOYS FOR CHRISTMAS

Kiwanians from Cortana and Ascension Clubs helped give a child a reason to smile this Christmas season during the St. Vincent de Paul 2024 Sylvia's Toys for Christmas drive.

On Wednesday, December 4 from Cortana members Wanda Magee, Keith

& Tammy McDavid, Troy Pater, and Khaki & Tony Pittman sorted and wrapped approximately 200 gifts.

CHRISTMAS TREES

The Cortana Kiwanis Foundation sponsored five Christmas trees at OLOL Children's Hospital. One tree is in the emergency room the other 4 are in the Medical Office Bldg. where all the specialist doctors are.

SPORTSMAN'S PARADISE RAFFLE

Cortana Kiwanis held its inaugural gun raffle to raise funds for community projects. Led by Dana Vutera and Troy Pater, it was an overwhelming success. Every ticket was sold, and Treasurer Jim Kaiser tracked each ticket. We extend our gratitude to everyone who purchased a ticket and assisted us in upholding the Kiwanis mission of improving the world, one child, and one community at a time.



Dawn Busters Hosts Record Breaking Turkey Fry

By B.J. Kruse, Dawn Busters Kiwanis Club

Our Annual Turkey Fry was held on Wednesday, November 27, 2024, at the Sheet Metal Workers Union Hall in Metairie. After frying a record 1,053 Cajun Injected Fried Turkeys, **Dawn Busters** had a wonderful Thanksgiving Meal with family and friends as we gave God thanks for our many blessings. As a Kiwanis Club we are truly blessed with a signature fundraising Turkey Fry Project. It was a Dawn Busters' show of service and cooperation with the Krewe of Carrollton and the Sheet Metal Union. Our efforts did not go without notice as District Governor Claude Vinson, Governor-Elect Marcel Lashover, District Trustee Jennifer White, and District Executive Director Jen Robertson were in attendance. They were truly amazed by the



magnitude of the Turkey Fry and commented that only Dawn Busters could pull this off! To the long list of Dawn Busters who participated and to Turkey Fry Chairman Joe Guilbeau, many thanks for a job well done! To the Krewe of Carrollton and the Sheet

Metal Union you are all fantastic partners! To the Key Clubs: Ecole Classique, Kenner Discovery, and Mount Carmel, you were all outstanding and we could not have done it without all your efforts.

KCNO: Kiwanis Kares Christmas

By Cathy Simmons, New Orleans Kiwanis Club

"*Kiwanis Kares Christmas*," by the **Kiwanis Club of New Orleans**, delivered Christmas 75 gifts to 19 children from the Volunteers of America Christmas Wish program and 7 clients of Magnolia Community Services. We also worked with our **Ben Franklin**

Key Club to collect more than 200 pairs of gloves, 150 pairs of socks and 135 pair of underwear for the homeless of New Orleans Mission. Yes, the KCNO elves were busy delivering joy to those in need in our community. Merry Christmas!



Dyersburg Provides Food for 400 Families

By Sandy Tarkington, Dyersburg Kiwanis Club

Kiwanis Club of Dyersburg collected financial donations from residents, businesses, schools, churches, and the club’s own members for their 79th annual Goodfellows program. This year, the Club provided 400 boxes of food, with approximate cost per box of \$85, so that food-insecure families could have nutritious meals during the holiday season. This was an increase of 50 boxes from 2023.



On December 18, Kiwanis Club of Dyersburg and community volunteers met at the Dyer County Fairgrounds to construct and pack boxes. Volunteers

included Kiwanis members, their families, friends, and students from area schools. The next morning at 5:00 a.m., Dyersburg Street Department, Newbern Public Works Department, and Dyer County Highway Department began delivering all boxes.

John Lowrance, a Goodfellows project coordinator, said, “The boxes contained chicken, canned goods, flour, sugar, oranges, potatoes, packaged beans, and many more staples.”

Involvement from area businesses

included the following: Rusken Packaging Inc (Jackson, TN) donated boxes, Save A Lot ordered food, Develey Mustard donated sauces, Burks Beverage provided cartage, Love’s Truck Stop made breakfast available, and schools provided a trailer and carted away the packaging.

This year’s Goodfellows was a true community operation, with Kiwanis Club of Dyersburg working with the whole county to improve our area, *400 households at a time.*



Hammond Answers the Call to Serve

By Judy & Vic Couvillion, Hammond Kiwanis Club

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD: SAMARITAN'S PURSE -

Continuing a tradition started several years ago, the **Hammond Kiwanis Club** filled 150 shoeboxes with a great variety of “goodies” destined for children in developing nations who would otherwise not have a gift at Christmas. Through Operation Christmas Child, Samaritan’s Purse, the shoebox gifts eventually reach children in more than 100 nations. A dedicated group of club members and a few volunteers met at a local agency, TADAC, to quickly fill the boxes to the point where they were overflowing with small toys, writing materials, crayons, toothbrushes, clothing items, and fun playthings such as harmonicas, kazoo’s, yoyos, beach balls and Mardi Gras beads. The shoeboxes were delivered in Kiwanian Roy Blackwood’s trailer to the River Christian Church, the local collection point for the shoeboxes. From there, the boxes were shipped to a sorting site in the U.S. At the shipping point club members learned that it was rumored that these boxes would be going to Africa! They left Hammond with love from the Kiwanis Club. Just one more example of, “serving the children of the

world one child and one community at a time.” Among those at the “packing” were Kiwanians Terry King along with a grandson; Immediate Past President Roy Blackwood; King with Frederic Gonzales, the son of member Carlee Gonzales; and the “packing crew” that posed at the trailer in which the boxes were delivered.

A CALL TO BEAUTIFY - Responding to a request to help clean up and beautify the grounds of the Wesley Methodist Student Center on the campus of Southeastern Louisiana University, members of the Hammond Kiwanis Club spent a Saturday morning clearing tangled vines, carting off old, dilapidated picnic tables and in general doing landscape at the center. Kiwanians Rusty Meyer and Dane Bounds expended plenty of energy pulling down unruly vines. Member Megan Lynch is all smiles as she takes on the chore of trimming a bush. Gerard Blanchard and Bounds study how to attack some unruly growth that had to be removed. Over the years members of the Hammond Kiwanis Club have answered the call to assist in the community when called upon to do so. Hot weather the day of the mission at the

Wesley Center didn’t deter the Kiwanians who seized upon the opportunity to be of service to others.



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Division 12 Celebrates Kiwanis One Day

By Division 12 Lieutenant Governor Amanda Johnson, North Lake Charles Kiwanis

Kiwanis One Day was celebrated, Monday October 21, 2024 by **Division 12**. Kiwanis members donated cases of water to be distributed to Hurricane Milton victims in the Florida area. Division 12 is made up of eight Kiwanis Clubs including: Calcasieu, DeRidder, Jennings, Lake Charles, North Lake Charles, South Lake Charles, Southwest Louisiana, and Sulphur. Division 12 Lieutenant Governor Amanda Johnson is exploring the idea of a new clubs in both Iowa and Moss Bluff in the near future. Pictured at bottom right are Past Governor Eva Abate of Kiwanis Club of Southwest Louisiana and current President Allen Joyner, with Lt. Governor Amanda Johnson of Kiwanis Club of North Lake Charles.



Hammond Answers the Call to Serve Continued . . .

By Judy & Vic Couvillion, Hammond Kiwanis Club

FEEDING THE LADY LIONS AND VISITORS - Hammond Kiwanis Club members, from left, Mayson Foster, Bill Worthy, Sid Guedry, Byron Bankston and Dane Bounds stand ready to dish out spaghetti, meat sauce, salad, bread and cookies to members of the Southeastern Louisiana University Lady Lions basketball team. Team

members from the basketball squads of both Southeastern and their opponent for the night enjoyed the meal cooked by Judy Couvillion of the Hammond Kiwanis Club. Kiwanians enjoy the opportunity to interact with athletes from the local university several times during the school year. Over the past few years Kiwanians have prepared and

served meals to the university's baseball, softball, basketball and soccer teams. Strong bonds between the Hammond Kiwanis Club and the university community have existed since the club's founding in 1940. Supporting the university is part of the club's effort to serve the community in various ways.



Opelousas Kiwanis: Doing Great Things!

By Carrie Richard, Opelousas Kiwanis Club

HALLOWEEN

The 3rd Annual Trail or Treat was held October 26. **Kiwanis Club of Opelousas** Secretary Carrie Richard and President-Elect Pam Vidrine attended this year's event. The event was hosted by the Opelousas Tourism Center in the South City Park. This is our 3rd year in attending this wonderful event. There were 24 vendors set up throughout the walking trail as well as free train rides and a free petting zoo.

On the 29th, Opelousas Kiwanis was asked by our Kiwanis Kids School, Park Vista Elementary, to serve with them at their first annual trunk or treat. I created coloring sheets by each grade level. We judged and picked the best one from each class. They were awarded a certificate and a Raising Canes gift card. The winners were as follows: Kindergartener Lucas Fontenot, 1st Grader Le'Brian Stelly, 3rd Grader Ayama Celestine and 4th Grader Axel Enriquez. Congratulations to all participants and winners.

SPICE UP GALA

Opelousas Kiwanis Club hosted our 2nd Annual Spice Up Gala on November 13 to recognize supporters and induct new members and leadership for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

Kiwanis Division 7 Lieutenant Governor Rhonda Lorio inducted new members and officers and Vice Governor Mr. Andrew Dozier assisted Mrs. Lorio. KADN Fox 15's own Marcelle Fontenot, a native of Opelousas, was the Emcee of our event. Milton Batiste, Superintendent of St. Landry Parish School Board & Kiwanian, spoke to the audience about the importance of education and the strategic plan he has for the 2024-2025 school year. He also recognized teachers for their service. Kiwanis Kids gave their testimony about their club, which included Nathaniel St. Julien of Creswell Middle and Antoine West & Kyenean West both of Park Vista Elementary. We also had volunteers from St. Landry Interact Club and the Youth Leadership Council serve dinner to our guests. We had approximately 175 guests attend the event.

This year's recognition ceremony honored outstanding business leaders who believe and support our mission of helping children in our community. The following were recognized: Mayor Julius Alsandor, Parish President Jessie Bellard, City Court Judge Shaun-Caillier Harden, Parks & Recreation Director Chris Rideau, Owner and CEO of Dupre Carrier Godchaux Insurance Agency, Inc. Joseph F. Godchaux, Jr. and CEO of St. Landry Bank Robbie Tomlinson. We also awarded Kiwanian of the Year to President-Elect Pam Vidrine as well Latasha Aggision and Marlena Cane for their collaborative efforts in keeping our finances in tact.

The event was chaired by Kiwanian board member Madelyn Rosette. President Shelly Fontenot assisted by creating our programs and publicizing the event. We, as Kiwanians, worked tirelessly creating a game plan for sponsorships, gathering donated raffle items from local business owners, creating a menu for the meal and decorating each table with a different flair. We had live music presented by recording artist

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Opelousas Kiwanis: Doing Great Things! Continued . . .

By Carrie Richard, Opelousas Kiwanis Club



Holly Ortego, as well as a live auction for raffle baskets. We raised money to be able to support our mission in helping children and numerous organizations in our community.

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

Breakfast with Santa began some years ago. The mission was to be able to provide 30 minutes of free therapy for disabled children. The Cerebral Palsy Clinic was initially formed on November 19, 1957. The clinic opened to help the very first patient Kenneth Meche at 5 years old. It took 3 years and \$20,000 to open the clinic and it was all money raised through donations.

Once the clinic opened, community leaders began fundraisers through cake sales, Christmas tree sales and did receive a small benefit from United Way. But, it wasn't enough to sustain the clinic throughout the year; even with the help of other clubs hosting fundraisers and donating funds to this tremendous cause.

In 1992, Nolan and Gayle Simmons of Opelousas, La. established the Breakfast with Santa fundraiser. It quickly became an annual event with Santa and his friends hosting an early breakfast with children from the clinic

and others in St. Landry Parish. The event was held at the Simmon's farm for the next 4 years. By 1996, Breakfast with Santa ended it's era.

In 2004, local and former businessman Mr. Bobby Dupre, former owner of Dupre Carrier Godchaux Insurance Agency, decided it was time for Santa to invite the community back for breakfast. For years, Mr. Dupre supported and volunteered and even played Santa himself.

In the 1st year of Mr. Dupre hosting Breakfast with Santa, it raised more than \$20,000 for the clinic. Over the next 14 years, the clinic benefited from raising over \$100,000 from this annual event with more than 400 people in attendance.

From 2017 - 2019, Breakfast with Santa was held at the former Indian Hills Country Club in Opelousas, La. Tickets could be purchased in advance for \$25 a piece, where breakfast was

prepared by local celebrity chefs. Numerous organizations volunteered to serve the people who attended Breakfast with Santa.

When Covid hit in 2020, we were in the age of social distancing but that didn't stop Mr. Dupre with this mission. To go plates were made and picked up in drive thru fashion and the quota was still met.

In 2022, Indian Hills Country Club was sold and the breakfast moved to the Opelousas Civic Center where the tradition carried on. That would be Mr. Dupre's last Breakfast with Santa.

This year, our celebrity chef, Jason Huguet, owner and operator of The Steamboat in Washington, La. hosted Breakfast with Santa. Mr. Dupre's daughter Kelly Dupre has taken the reigns on this for the past few years when her father had fallen ill. He would be proud to see this beautiful tradition carried on. Ms. Lynn Moreau is the director of the Cerebral Palsy Clinic and has been for over 20 years.

Kiwanis of Opelousas for the past few years has volunteered and donated to this wonderful cause along with other local nonprofit organizations serving the citizens in the community.



Merry Christmas from Opelousas Kiwanis

By Carrie Richard, Opelousas Kiwanis Club



LIGHTING OF THE NATIVITY

The Lighting of the Nativity was held November 30th at the courthouse square in Opelousas, La. This event was started back in the 40's according to Robbie Sebastien, a board member with Opelousas Main Street. The nativity scene is beautiful handmade bisque life-size statues of the nativity. The nativity is housed in a small brick building on the courthouse square on the corner of Landry Street. There were over 30 vendors lined in the streets selling handmade items as well as baked goods. The courthouse square consisted of free live music, free kids face painting, a free section with a folklore group that allowed children to grab an instrument to play, photos with Santa and free taco soup from provided by the **Opelousas Kiwanis**. We served over 300 bowls!

President-Elect Pam Vidrine, with American Bank, and Secretary Carrie Richard, with Dupre Carrier Godchaux, were assisted by Kiwanians Latasha Aggission, CiCi Savy and Toby Vicknair. We were also assisted by Pro-

ducer Brian Harmon with Dupre Carrier Godchaux and Toby's wife Desiree. We arrived at 12 p.m. and began cooking in 2 large pots in time for the opening at 3 p.m. We had many positive compliments on the taste of the taco soup. We were so happy to be a part of the community event. We were also assisted by our Youth Leadership Council through the St. Landry Chamber Foundation. Thank you all to who assisted in this wonderful event.

CHRISTMAS WISH LISTS

The Kiwanis Club of Opelousas has embodied the true meaning of giving during Christmastime, mainly to our

high school students experiencing homelessness. We discovered through our own Kiwanian, Tawasha Thomas, Parent and Family Engagement Coordinator, that there were a total of 39 homeless children in our parish. Our initial plight was going to be to pilot one local high school. However, when we found out the total children in the parish, we expanded generosity to all. We were thrilled that this was even possible to do. The children were asked to create a wish list by indicating if they were male or female, their age, clothing and shoe size. We asked them to each indicate what they wanted for Christmas which included their needs and as well as their wants. We received 33 Christmas Wish Lists in November from Ms. Thomas. Each Kiwanian adopted a child and shopped for that child. Kiwanis Club of Opelousas was able to gift each child a \$100.00 Visa Gift Card in addition to the gifts that each Kiwanian was able to provide from the children's wish list. It was truly a heart-warming experience for the Kiwanis Club of Opelousas.



Ponchatoula Hosts Thanksgiving

By Pete Clark, Ponchatoula Kiwanis Club

The Kiwanis Club of Ponchatoula partnered with the Ponchatoula Rotary Club for our annual Thanksgiving luncheon for the Council on Aging at our Kiwanis Log Cabin. This is a tradition of teamwork that has been phenomenally successful year after year. Both clubs helped prepare the hot meals and served approximately one hundred Council members that enjoyed a delicious lunch. The Ponchatoula Council looks forward to this event as they can socialize with their friends in the community. To see the smile and happiness on their faces means the world to us. After lunch was served and eaten, the second part was the donation of fruit baskets to Westminster Place Senior apartment living as they also look forward to the delicious fruit to eat. Our Kiwanis Club is always excited and thrilled to give back to our community in any way possible.



Red Stick Shares Love of Reading

By Tommy Darenbourg, Red Stick Kiwanis Club

For the fourth consecutive year, the **Kiwanis Club of Red Stick** has continued its “A Book of My Own” service project to promote a love of reading to young students at Cedarcrest-Southmoor Elementary School in Baton Rouge, La. This school aims to prepare its students for gifted and talented screening with an emphasis on music, math, science, and academics.

The school boasts a diverse student body and faculty and encourages everyone to embrace all cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds. School performance scores have increased each year.

On October 25, Red Stick Kiwanis volunteers read “Ms. Nelson is Missing!” to the second graders. Much to their delight, each student received their own personalized copy to instill a sense of pride and ownership. Red Stick members returned December 12 to read “If You Give a Mouse a Cookie” to first graders. On January 9, club volunteers will read “Caps for Sale” to kindergarteners.

Shepherding the project since its inception is Club President/Div. 8W Lt. Governor Cherryl Matthews, a previous principal at the school.

“This investment of time and financial resources has benefitted the students and especially their families who appreciate what Kiwanis is doing to encourage reading literacy,” Matthews

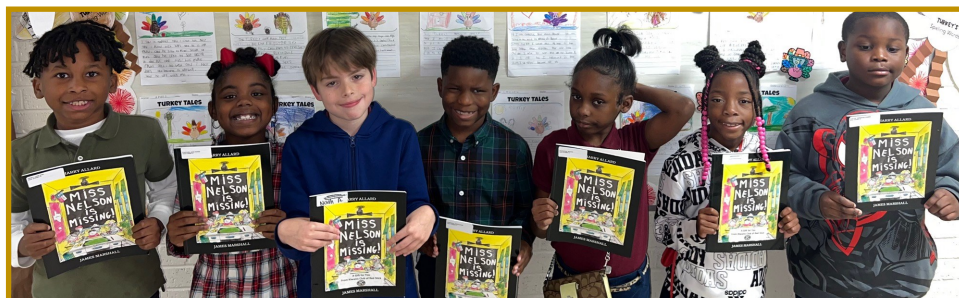
said. This Red Stick Kiwanis Club project was made possible in part by a grant from the LaMissTenn Kiwanis District Foundation.



Ready to read on the October 25 service day are Project Chair Cherryl Matthews, Carolyn Robinson, Mark Cartwright, Matt Robinson, and Oni Watson.



A sea of second graders surround volunteer reader Matt Robinson, indicating a captive audience.



These second graders enjoyed “Miss Nelson is Missing” read to them by Red Stick Kiwanis volunteers.



Red Stick Kiwanis’ newest member Clarence Lawson (middle) was joined by Tom Gibbs and Matt Robinson.

St. Bernard-Arabi Fights Against Food Insecurity

By Tracy Duplantier, St. Bernard-Arabi Kiwanis Club



The Kiwanis Club of St. Bernard-Arabi is proud to support the Community Center of St. Bernard in the fight against food insecurity! This year the club has been testing new programs and ways to help. After a very successful October candy drive to help make extra special the backpack program, providing food to students with food insecurity over the weekends, members also volunteered at the first Roaring Twenties Casino Night fundraiser, and more recently the club organized a parish wide Holiday Food Drive. Our food drive was an incredible partnership with many of our Sponsored



Leadership Programs and schools. Each grade level collected certain non-perishable food items for Holiday Food Baskets. Some schools offered a pizza

party for the classes who collected the most food. All together over 550 items were collected and so many kids had the chance to make a positive impact.

Union City Makes It Happen

By Courtney Dozier, Union City Kiwanis Club

The Kiwanis club of Union City was proudly honored with the “Make It Happen” award during the Obion County Chamber of Commerce annual award banquet held on November 21, at Discovery Park of America. The award recognizes organizations and individuals whose efforts have had a significant and positive impact on the community.

The Kiwanis Club was selected for its commitment to community service, particularly its focus on improving the lives of children and families in the community.

“We are truly humbled to receive the “Make It Happen” award,” said Tracy Shaw, President of the Kiwanis club of Union City. “This award reflects the dedication of our members and the amazing support we receive from the community.”

As the Kiwanis club of Union City looks ahead to the future, its members are committed to continuing to support even more children and families by working together to make a lasting difference.



Share Your Club's News!

By Tiffany LaPorte, District Bulletin Editor

Submit your article and photographs:

EMAIL: tiffany@lamisstenn.org

ARTICLES & PHOTOGRAPHS: All article submissions must be attached in an email as a Word document along with picture captions. *Please submit original articles written by your club's members. We cannot use pre-published articles due to copyright laws.* Do not include photos within text documents; send as separate attachments in the highest resolution possible.

Please send one Word document along with pictures attached together in one email. Multiple stories per club should be sent in one Word Document, preferably an overview of each story in one article.

DEADLINES:

The deadline for submissions is always two weeks before the publication's date. The deadlines for the remaining 2024-2025 Kiwanis Year are:

April 2025 Issue = Deadline: March 16, 2025

July 2025 Issue = Deadline June 13, 2025

Include this information:

CLUB: Club Name and Author **TITLE:** Article Title

EVENT: Make sure to answer: **what** was done, **why** it was done, **who** benefited, **when** and **where** it occurred, **how** it was accomplished, etc.

ACCURACY: Please double check all dates, locations, etc., and be sure that all names are spelled correctly. While we do our best to correct issues if we notice them, we do not have the resources to confirm this type of information.

PHOTOGRAPHS: If you're shooting a service project, look for an action photo of the volunteers in progress or interacting with children. Shoot from the front – we are not likely to use a shot with mostly backs. Use as high a resolution as possible. Captions may not always be published, but it is helpful if you can identify subjects.

AND REMEMBER . . . THE BEST SHOT WINS THE COVER!

Keep in mind, the cover photograph for the District News Magazine will be selected based on clarity and the display of impactful service.

We want photographs showing how your club impacts the community!



*"The LaMissTenn District News"
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Kiwanis International*

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