



NEWS

July 2025



Key Leader North: Developing Leaders for Life

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

20



21



25



ON THE COVER:

The Key Leader North weekend retreat on April 25-27, held at Lakeshore Camp in Eva, TN, empowered teens to become more caring and confident leaders.

[See more on page 16](#)

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Searching for that Sweet Spot

By Claude Vinson, Governor

In life, we often talk about "finding the sweet spot" - that elusive point where connectivity is most optimal. Whether it's in work, relationships, creativity, or physical pursuits, the sweet spot represents the perfect equilibrium between contrasting forces. It's where productivity meets enjoyment, effort meets ease, and ambition meets contentment.

Whether it's the crisp sound of a tennis racket connecting with the ball, the seamless arc of a basketball shot swishing through the net, or the resonating thump of a baseball bat hitting a home run, the sweet spot is what athletes strive for. It is both a tangible concept and a metaphor for excellence, embodying the balance between physical prowess and mental alignment.

But, the Holy Grail of all sweet spots, one might argue, is what Vice Governor Andrew, Trustee John Gherardi, and all the other great golfers of our time would attest, yeah, connecting with that particular spot on the golf club to be the most glorious feeling in the world!

Ultimately, the holy grail of sweet spots is a treasure found in the everyday moments of alignment, where even amidst challenges, we can whisper to ourselves, "This feels just right."

But achieving the sweet spot is just not about sports. There's a sweet spot in personal relationships,

friendships and yes, in Kiwanis club membership. That quest of searching for that sweet spot sometimes eludes our clubs which, in turn, results in the loss of members.

Why does the sweet spot matter? Because, at its core, it's the balance which unlocks productivity, fulfillment, and sustainability. Club membership is where the quest for balance feels most urgent. It's the zone where members are challenged enough to stay engaged but not overwhelmed to the point of exhaustion. Clubs need to release from the old way of doing things and allow new ideas to flow.

Here's my formula for successful membership retention: Interest + Spontaneity + Play + Nimbleness + Mobility + Inclusion = the Sweet Spot. Incorporating this formula minimizes membership burnout resulting in membership loss.

Clubs should strive to break away from the molds of the past of doing the "same old same old". Year's ago that's what may have worked but, let's face it, in today's time, clubs must realize that there are younger people with newer ideas with newer answers and newer things that can propel our clubs into new realms of possibilities. But, when they clash with the same old formula they quit not too long after they join. For those who have been Kiwanians for awhile, may simply quit because they've lost interest. So it's up to clubs to continually find the sweet spot to what interests people in today's world by developing programs and engaging in projects which helps retain the interest of its membership.

Sure, there are many tools regarding membership available but it's what members are interested in that

keeps them as members. Here are a few tips clubs might use to help keep up with the sweet spot: 1) Use constructive planning programs and projects to channel creativity effectively; 2) Play, have fun and allow moments of uninhibited experimentation without fear of failure from others; 3) Ask for feedback and constructive criticism to help understand what your members are thinking, and finally, 4) Just rest and take time outs. Sometimes periods of inactivity often spark the most profound inspiration. And what about personal relationships? They too are connected with membership as they thrive when there's a balance between independence and togetherness. The relationship sweet spot is where individuals maintain their own sense of identity while fostering connection and mutual support. Tired of the same ole stuff? Hey! Shake that rust off and spruce it up! Interject some life into those ol' bones! Do something spontaneous and creative even if it's not popular for few.

However you look at it, finding the sweet spot is not just a destination, but the never-ending journey towards balance, harmony, excellence, and yes, maintaining the interest of our members.

It's about being intentional in how we navigate the push and pull of our desires, responsibilities, and goals. Whether in work, relationships, creativity, or physical wellness, the sweet spot offers a path to harmony that allows us to thrive. By seeking equilibrium, we cultivate a life marked by both achievement and joy - a life that truly feels "just right."

So, search for that certain spot and life in Kiwanis will be oh so sweet!

Be Your Invincible You! ☺



A Message from the Governor-Elect

By Marcel Lashover, Governor-Elect

Hello LaMissTenn Kiwanians!

What a busy 2nd quarter and 3rd quarter of my Governor-Elect year already. We just had a great week-end in Natchez for the LT Governor/Trustee Training, as well as your District Board Meeting. I presented our district's distinguished awards that your club and members can receive in the future. Additionally, we aim to establish four new clubs in the district and support existing clubs that wish to expand. This leads me to introduce my theme for the 2025-2026 year.

The name of that theme is "IF YOU DON'T A.S.K. YOU WILL NOT G.E.T." So, if you don't ask new folks to join your club or just volunteer at one of your fundraisers, SLP's, or just a community project to clean up a park, you will not get new members. I often find myself forgetting to ask people I meet or know. So, what I am saying in this message is that I have started to ask more, since the only two answers you can get are a yes or a no.... Correct?

Additionally, my primary goal is to increase LaMissTenn's member-

ship to 4,000 (which is where we were before the COVID-19 epidemic) by the end of my term, September 30, 2026. Currently, your district has approximately 3,600 members, and we anticipate gaining more before the end of September 2025. However, we will also lose some members for various reasons. So, I need your help ... no, the kids need your help to support them into the future. That is what Kiwanis is all about?

For the future, we hope you are inspired to help us grow the district by increasing and strengthening your club. Remember, you can make a lasting impact today by leaving a legacy for the younger members that will keep the light of your club glowing for the kids and community we support.

I am getting ready to go to ICON in Pittsburgh at the end of June

2025 and seeing a lot of old friends, including reconnecting with all the class of Governors-Elect and making some new ones.

Then I hope to see everyone in Memphis at DCON in August. If you haven't made your reservations and registered yet, please do so today.

To conclude this article, I hope you and your family have a safe summer, whether you stay home or travel to the beach.

If you need help, please reach out to any one of us, including your Lieutenant Governors, so we can have a conversation. I can be reached via email at lamisstengov2526@gmail.com or by cell at 504-272-1600.

Thank you, and we are here for all of you!

Marcel Lashover

2024-2025 Governor-Elect



Governor-Elect Marcel's team of Lieutenant Governors at the LG Orientation Conference in Natchez, MS



VOLUNTEERING WITH A PURPOSE

By Andrew Dozier, Vice Governor

When we speak of shaping our lives through service to others, we speak of our Kiwanis family that continues to dedicate their time, and hard work to meet the challenges of their club missions and goals to make their communities better.

I had the opportunity to visit with four of LaMissTenn Kiwanis clubs (Big Easy, New Orleans; Mois-sant, Pontchartrain; New Orleans; and Dawn Busters, Metairie) during the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, a yearly spring celebration of Louisiana's culture and heritage through music, food, and art.

One of my goals is to visit and participate in our clubs' service projects, volunteering when I'm availa-

ble. While visiting the Big Easy Club meeting, I asked President Sharon Henry what was one of the club's service projects in which members fully participate and get successful results.

With no hesitation, President Sharon sided the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival where their club has a beer booth serving beverages to fun festival crowds at the Fair Grounds over a two-weekend celebration.

Kiwanis Club of Big Easy has been participating for over 30 plus years. I was glad to volunteer with the club and see the work and dedication all the members and volunteers put into the planning and the teamwork that goes into preparation.

Members of all four clubs are examples of achieving club excellence from operations and fundraising to service and community outreach. Kiwanians are generous with

their time, and are creative and passionate about making a difference.

Let's engage with partners that align with our mission and learn to create meaningful service projects, for children and that have a great community impact. Throughout this Great Historic District, our clubs are involved in a variety of service projects that involve fundraising, community services, and assisting children locally.

There is a saying "Service is what life is all about, Great acts are made up of small deeds". I truly believe that serving others and making a difference to someone else every day would make life simpler for you and me.

With only four months left, let's continue to strengthen our clubs, increase membership and celebrate our rewarding achievements. See y'all at the finish line!!!!

I Salute You!

Andrew Dozier





You're Invited!

By John Fry, Immediate Past Governor

You're Invited: Join me and a few hundred Kiwanis friends for the 2025 Louisiana-Mississippi-West Tennessee Kiwanis District Convention in Memphis!

Mark your calendars and pack your bags—we're headed to Memphis, Tennessee, August 8–10, 2025, for the Louisiana-Mississippi-West Tennessee District Convention! I'm personally inviting YOU to be a part of an incredible weekend full of connection, inspiration, and fun.

This year's convention promises something for everyone. Whether you're a longtime member or new to the district, this is your chance to grow, engage, and celebrate alongside passionate individuals from across our three state region.

Here's what you can look forward to:

• Dynamic Speakers

Hear from outstanding leaders who will challenge and inspire you in

your service and leadership journey.

• Interactive Workshops

Gain tools, share ideas, and sharpen your skills during hands-on breakout sessions that cover a range of topics relevant to your role and passion.

• Networking & Fellowship

Build lasting relationships with fellow members and discover new opportunities to collaborate across our three-state region.

• Saturday Night 80s-Themed Party

Break out your neon, leg warmers, and big hair! Saturday night we're

throwing it back with a totally rad 80s party—complete with music, dancing, and plenty of fun surprises.

• Annual Prayer Breakfast

Sunday Morning We'll close the weekend in unity and reflection with our beloved Prayer Breakfast, a meaningful tradition that brings us together in faith and gratitude.

The 2025 District Convention isn't just an event—it's a celebration of everything we stand for and strive toward. And it wouldn't be the same without you there.

Let's make this convention unforgettable. I'll see you in Memphis!



July 2025 Check-In



LUNCH & LEARN

With LaMissTenn

**15 minute education webinars
2nd Friday of the month | 12PM**

Apr 11, 2025:	Kiwanis Kompanions
May 9, 2025:	How to Submit Club Officers
Jun 13, 2025:	Get Ready for DCON
Jul 11, 2025:	District Spotlight & Gold Star Clubs
Aug 1, 2025:	How to Invoice (1st week due to DCON)
Sept 12, 2025:	Foundation Grants

Find zoom links on calendar at www.LaMissTenn.org

Mark Your Calendar!



2025 Club Leadership Education

Interactive Virtual Sessions on Tuesdays at 6PM

- 6/10/2025: Board Member, Bylaws & Policies
- 6/17/2025: New Member Orientation & Youth Protection
- 7/8/2025: Membership Chair
- 7/15/2025: Treasurer 101
- 7/22/2025: Treasurer 102
- 7/29/2025: Secretary 101
- 8/5/2025: Secretary 102
- 8/12/2025: President

Zoom links can be found at www.LaMissTenn.org



CELEBRATING SUPERHEROES OF SERVICE

LAMISSTENN DCON AUGUST 8-10, 2025

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

WWW.LAMISSTENN.ORG



2024-2025 Award Programs

- ★ Distinguished Club
- ★ Distinguished Kiwanian
- ★ Distinguished Secretary
- ★ Distinguished Lieutenant Governor



Will your club be distinguished?
What about your secretary, LG, or you?
Check out the Awards and criteria!



Division 15 Represents in Natchez



↑ Maggie Kirby, Division 15 incoming Key Club Lt. Governor; Lorri Alles, Region III Trustee; Claude Vinson, LaMissTenn Governor; and Donna Osburn, Division 15 Lt. Governor attended board meetings during the Lieutenant Governors' training in Natchez, MS on Saturday, March 31, 2025.

Welcome to the K Family Plaquemines Kiwanis!



Plaquemines Kiwanis Club in Plaquemines Parish of Louisiana officially chartered on April 10, 2025. The newly formed club is sponsored by the St. Bernard-Arabi Kiwanis. Club members are excited to start making a difference in the Plaquemines community!

May 2025

Gold Star Clubs

- ★ Amory Kiwanis
- ★ Ascension Kiwanis
- ★ Bayou Teche Kiwanis
- ★ Big Easy Kiwanis
- ★ Bluff City Kiwanis
- ★ Central Kiwanis
- ★ East Livingston Kiwanis
- ★ Greater Covington Kiwanis
- ★ Greater Ouachita Kiwanis
- ★ Greenville Kiwanis
- ★ Kenner North Kiwanis
- ★ Long Beach Kiwanis
- ★ NW St. Tammany Kiwanis
- ★ Opelousas Kiwanis
- ★ Pearl Kiwanis
- ★ Pineville Kiwanis
- ★ Plaquemines Kiwanis
- ★ Pontchartrain Kiwanis
- ★ Rankin County Kiwanis
- ★ Southwest Louisiana Kiwanis
- ★ St. Bernard-Arabi Kiwanis
- ★ Thibodaux Kiwanis
- ★ Vicksburg Kiwanis
- ★ Walker Kiwanis
- ★ Zachary Kiwanis



District Spotlight

June 2025

Congratulations to the following clubs for being on top of their administrative duties:

- ★ Twin Cities Kiwanis, Div. 1A
- ★ Waynesboro Kiwanis, Div. 3
- ★ Algiers Kiwanis, Div. 4A
- ★ St. Bernard-Arabi Kiwanis, Div. 4A
- ★ Lafayette Kiwanis, Div. 7
- ★ Opelousas Kiwanis, Div. 7
- ★ Ascension Kiwanis, Div. 8E
- ★ East St. Mary Kiwanis, Div. 17

Gold Start Clubs have reached their monthly goal on the path to a 10% annual net membership increase.



CELEBRATING SUPERHEROES OF SERVICE

AUGUST 8-10 | MEMPHIS, TN

WWW.LAMISSTENN.ORG

Registration Deadline: 7/31/2025

REGISTRATION:

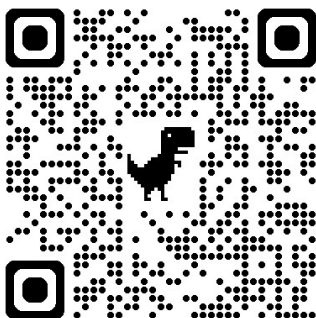
- BASE REGISTRATION (Workshops & Fellowship Lunch): \$175
- ADDITIONAL FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON TICKETS: \$60
- PAST DISTRICT OFFICERS BREAKFAST TICKETS: \$50
- GOVERNOR'S PARTY TICKETS (80s PARTY): \$75
- PRAYER BREAKFAST: \$50
- SPOUSES' TOUR TICKETS: \$35

HOUSE OF DELEGATES:

- BYLAWS AMENDMENT 1
- BYLAWS AMENDMENT 2
- RESOLUTION ENDORSING LINDA RAMSEY AS KI TRUSTEE CANDIDATE

AWARDS & CONTESTS:

- FACEBOOK AWARDS
- NEWSLETTER AWARD
- HALL OF FAME AWARD
- FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR
- LAWPERSON OF THE YEAR
- LAYPERSON OF THE YEAR
- TEACHER OF THE YEAR



DCON SERVICE PROJECT:

The DCON 2025 service project is supporting the [Madonna Learning Center](#) and Madonna Aktion Club sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Germantown. Please consider using the [Madonna Learning Center's Amazon wish list](#) or bringing items for their incentive store (purses, costume jewelry, dollar store items, etc.) to show your support!

FOUNDATION:

GIFT BASKET ROOM: Clubs can support by donating a basket and members can support by purchasing tickets!

FRIENDS OF THE FOUNDATION RECEPTION: Friday, 8/8 at 4pm

RIVER OF LIFE RAFFLE: Enter to win a framed River of Life - a \$750 value! Winner to be drawn at House of Delegates. Must be present to win.

*Re-Membering
the 80s!*

Saturday Night | August 9th



**Don't Miss Governor Claude's
Rad Dance Party!**

Like totally wear your best 80s garb!

\$75/Person

www.LaMissTenn.org



SCAN THE QR CODE FOR ALL INFORMATION ABOUT DCON OR VISIT WWW.LAMISSTENN.ORG

WELCOME TO THE KIWANIS FAMILY!

Reflects new membership from 3/31/25 to 6/27/2025.

Clint Anderson, *DeRidder*
 Kristee Arbourgh, *Plaquemines*
 Bridget Beck, *Gulfport*
 Cheyenne Bertrand, *Leesville*
 Dana Bishop Wattigney, *Plaquemines*
 Franklin Blakeney, *Gulfport*
 Jason Blalock, *Lafayette*
 Calvin Bowden, *Walker*
 Tawanda Bowman, *Cortana*
 Rebecca Bradley, *Long Beach*
 John Brister, *Walker*
 Sherri Brown, *Plaquemines*
 Robin Corradi, *Plaquemines*
 Amanda Cox, *Plaquemines*
 Sidney Davidge, *Amite*
 April Davis, *Baton Rouge*
 Mikayla Davison, *Lake Charles*
 Theresa Delgado, *Dawn Busters*
 Mary Dimatteo, *St. Bernard-Arabi*
 Sarah Drell, *Alexandria*
 Jason Fortune, *River City Savannah*
 Felicia Frank, *Lake Charles*
 Robert Frederick, *Rayville*
 Joshua Gaspard, *New Iberia*
 Erica Green, *Rankin County*
 David Guidry, *Lake Charles*
 Allision Hagan, *Opelousas*
 Mary Ellen Hammer, *Plaquemines*
 Priscilla Harris, *Bluff City*
 Florence Haynes-Cummings, *Greenville*
 Carson Hickman, *Rankin County*
 Jessica Hightower, *Twin Cities Ken-Tenn*
 Larry Howell, *Alexandria*
 Dawson Howie, *Alexandria*
 Home Hughes, *Grenada*
 Steven Hyland, *Tupelo*
 Monika Jones, *Lucedale*
 Dana Jones, *Plaquemines*
 Robert Landry, *Greater Ouachita*
 Marlon Lewis, *New Iberia*
 Anna Lincoln, *Plaquemines*
 Michelle Lindner, *Plaquemines*
 Isaac Little, *Rayville*
 Vincent Magliolo, *Northshore Mandeville*
 Laurence Manshel, *Dawn Buster*
 Rohini Maram, *Starkville*
 Russell Mayer, *Hammond*
 Paul Mayeaux, *St. Bernard-Arabi*
 Katrina McCann, *Vicksburg*

Sean McDonald, *Cortana*
 Adam Meyer, *Baton Rouge*
 Allison Montgomery, *Union City*
 Matthew Neal, *Alexandria*
 Ricky Newborne, *Rankin County*
 Dana Newsom, *Plaquemines*
 Wanda Newsome, *Pontchartrain*
 David Nunez, *New Orleans*
 Sue Olsson, *Bluff City*
 Justin Pamplin, *Algiers*
 Scott Parker, *Central*
 Robert Pate, *Plaquemines*
 Teresa Phelps, *Millington*
 Cheryl Picou, *Plaquemines*
 Thelemese Porter, *Zachary*
 Carla Powell-Lewis, *Baton Rouge Early Risers*
 Tammy Prine, *Plaquemines*
 Gary Todd Ray, *Walker*
 Jake Ray, *Tupelo*
 Ernestina Retana, *Plaquemines*
 Joey Richard, *Opelousas*
 Shelley Ritz, *Plaquemines*
 Robbie Robinson, *Plaquemines*
 Wayne Ryan, *Alexandria*
 Stephanie Ryan, *Dawn Busters*
 Cynthia Sanders, *Pineville*
 Steve Savoie, *Dawn Busters*
 Arlene Schoener, *Plaquemines*
 Jon Segura, *New Iberia*
 Seth Shapard, *Plaquemines*
 Janana Snowden, *Baton Rouge Early-Risers*
 Erin St. Pierre, *Northshore Mandeville*
 Samantha Stephen, *Walker*
 Alexandra Taisant, *St. Bernard-Arabi*
 Leah Talbot Reppel, *Plaquemines*
 Paula Tesvich, *Plaquemines*
 Loretta Tesvich, *Plaquemines*
 Frey Thieler, *Dawn Busters*
 Drew Treuting, *Plaquemines*
 Saara Treuting, *Plaquemines*
 Katrina Trudeau, *Plaquemines*
 Kimberly Watson, *Greenville*
 Amy Weinstein, *Baton Rouge*
 Eshambralaquic White, *St. Bernard-Arabi*
 Grey Williams, *Alexandria*
 Naomi Woodard, *Plaquemines*
 Jeffrey Wooton, *Plaquemines*
 Gabbriella Word, *Rayville*

Dr. Linda C. Ramsey Seeks LaMissTenn District Endorsement to Run for International Trustee

Dear Kiwanis Friends,

I would like to seek the Louisiana-Mississippi-West Tennessee Kiwanis District's endorsement to run for Kiwanis International Trustee in Manila, Philippines in the Summer of 2026. At this time, I am the sole candidate for this position. I would like to invite each of you to join me on this journey and become a part of our campaign team and travel with us to Manila. Our LaMissTenn District needs to have a representative on the Kiwanis International Board.

Building Bridges and Better Connections are key ingredients to success in whatever one undertakes. I would like to serve as the link in the communication chain between Kiwanis International and our District, LaMissTenn, as well as our communities and the people we serve around the world. Each of us is a part of something bigger and together we can build an even stronger and better Kiwanis Inter-



national Organization.

I am asking my son, Brett Ramsey, who is a travel agent, to put together a travel package for those of you who would like to go to the Kiwanis International Convention in Manila. I hope that many of you will decide to attend for I will need your help to get elected.

I am asking Brett to check into flights that leave from our district. Please let me know which airports you might be interested in using to make your departures. If you are unable to travel to Manila, you certainly can still be a part of the campaign team and help from here at home. Please let me know if you would like to help so I can add your

email address to our campaign mailing list.

I'm also going to ask Brett to check about some other sights and/or places we might wish to visit prior to and/or after the Kiwanis International Convention. I know when I was Governor of our District and the International Convention was in Geneva, Switzerland, I did both a pre-tour and post-tour of London, Paris before the convention, and a Mediterranean Cruise afterwards. Since we will be going to the other side of the globe, we should take advantage and visit some additional areas if we can.

I look forward to seeing each of you in Memphis, Tennessee on August 8-10, 2025 where Super Heroes and visitors from the 80s will be found! Safe travels and I will see you soon!

Sincerely,

Linda Ramsey
Past Governor 2010-2011
LaMissTenn District
731-225-7729 Mramsey2@utm.edu

Your LaMissTenn Kiwanis Foundation Update

By Tom Long, District Foundation President



The work of the District Foundation Board continues. Our mission is to provide financial assistance for our Kiwanis projects and programs within our District. There are multiple ways for clubs and individuals to contribute to the Foundation. We can assure you that all proceeds we receive are designed to be returned to our clubs in the form of grants, training, scholarships, and disaster relief.

The best way for a club to support our mission is by ensuring that your club has met its Annual Club Giving goal. For a mere \$5 per member, your club can become eligible for grants up to \$5,000 towards your worthy projects. That's an incredible return on investment!

Clubs may also consider recognizing your club members for a job well done, while at the same time supporting your District Foundation, by purchasing a Tablet of Honor. What a great way to acknowledge and honor Kiwanians for their service!

Clubs and individuals may consider our other endowments, such as the John T. Roberts Fellowship, the Charlie Ford Legacy, and the River of Life. You may order endowments and make payments easily online on the Endowments page on the District website. Now is a great time to plan for your end of the year recognitions.

We will again have John T. Roberts Followships, Charlie Ford Legacies, and framed Rivers of Life available for purchase at District Convention. We will also hold a raffle to award one attendee a River of Life at Convention. This is a rare opportunity to own a piece of LaMissTenn history.

For individuals, the best way to support our mission is to become a Friend of the Foundation. You can become a Friend at any time, and we have made the process easy and online on the Foundation page. You can either pay for everything at once or sign up for monthly installments.

The Foundation is grateful for all our Friends. In appreciation of your continued support, we are inviting current year-to-date Friends of the Foundation to a reception on Friday, August 8th, from 4-4:50 PM at the District Convention. This opportunity is available only to Friends of the Foundation. You can check the Friends of the Foundation list on the Foundation page at www.LaMissTenn.org to see if you are a current member. If you are not a Friend of the Foundation, become a member NOW if you would like to attend.

As an added incentive, all current and active Friends are entered into a raffle for a 28-inch Blackstone Griddle! That's a \$350 value! The drawing will take place at the Convention reception on Friday, and the winner must be present to claim this prize!

The Foundation is also asking all clubs that are sending representatives to the District Convention to donate a gift basket. Our goal is to have 100% participation from our attending clubs. We are always impressed with the creativity on display with each gift basket. We also enjoy seeing how the clubs

express their unique culture through their baskets.

We are continually looking for ways to develop and improve the Foundation! Our Strategic Plan reinforces the mission to support scholarships and leadership training for Service Leadership Programs, as well as meaningful service projects of Kiwanis Clubs.

The Foundation committees are working hard in executing the Foundation's plans to assist in fundraising, strengthen communication with clubs, and increase awareness and availability of the Foundation's resources. Please contact the foundation board members assigned to your region for more information. Our current board members can be found on the Foundation webpage at www.lamisstenn.org.

Our Foundation Board members are always eager to visit your club and educate your members about the Foundation, its mission, and how the Foundation can assist your club. Whether you are seeking to charter a new SLP or whether you are looking for financial assistance for that next great project, the Foundation is happy to help. If your club would like to schedule a presentation or has any questions, please email us at foundation@lamisstenn.org to coordinate arrangements.

Lastly, the Foundation is always looking for Kiwanians who may be interested in serving. Your experience, skills and professional knowledge are important. Please contact our nominating committee or any board member. All applications will be reviewed and submitted to the board.

We look forward to seeing all of you in Memphis as we celebrate another year in service!



Kiwanis[®]

CHILDREN'S FUND

THE POSSIBILITY PROJECT-IMPACT CLUBS

By Lenny Simmons, Kiwanis Children's Fund District Chair

the POSSIBILITY PROJECT

The Kiwanis Children Fund (KCF) is closing in on raising **\$8 million dollars** in donations and pledges to achieve its **\$25 million dollar** goal. Your club can help by donating to the KCF.

Governor Claude has asked each club to consider donating at least \$5 per member to the Children's Fund. But if you would like to kick it up a notch, I would ask that you would consider becoming an **IMPACT CLUB**. With a gift that represents an average of at least \$500 per member over five years, your club will have a major role in the Kiwa-

nis family's effort to make a difference in the lives of children around the world.

So far, four clubs in our District have signed up to be an Impact Club: Kiwanis Clubs of Martin, TN, Oxford, MS, Pontchartrain, New Orleans, LA and New Orleans, LA.

So how can your Club raise these funds? The most effective result will come from a combination of fund-raising methods. These can include:

- Gifts generated from community fundraising events and activities
- Gifts from individual club members
- Gifts from the club treasury
- Gifts from the club foundation
- Gifts from local businesses in your community

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! Consider the children in our communities and the world!

10
MILLION KIDS

us\$25 MILLION

5 YEARS



LET'S BUILD OUR BRAND!

By Donna Leggett, LaMissTenn District Public Relations Chair

Is your club utilizing social media to build your brand? The good news is that it is never too late to get started or to improve your social media presence. Using social media offers numerous benefits for Kiwanis clubs including:

Increased Awareness and Reach

- **Expanded Communication:** Social media platforms allow clubs to spread information about projects, fundraisers, and events to a wider audience than traditional methods like signs and flyers.
- **Boosted Visibility:** A strong social media presence can increase awareness of the club's activities and mission within the community.

Membership Growth & Engagement

- **Attracting Potential Members:** Social media can help attract people interested in service, leading to increased membership opportunities.
- **Showcasing Club Activities:** Sharing interesting photos and videos of club projects demonstrates the club's impact and can inspire potential members to join.

- **Encouraging Engagement:** Engaging content and photos encourage likes, comments, and shares, extending the club's reach and showing the camaraderie within the club.

Community Connection and Collaboration:

- **Highlighting Community Service:** Social media is an excellent tool to showcase the positive impact the club has on your community.
- **Tagging Partners:** Tagging organizations that benefit from or collaborate on club projects helps broaden the audience and acknowledge partnerships. Don't forget to tag your speaker and their organization.
- **Responding to Inquiries:** Promptly responding to comments and messages on social media shows interest and helps potential members and partners learn more about your club.

Fundraising and Resource Mobilization

- **Promoting Fundraising Activities:** Social media can be used to advertise fundraising events and attract participants and donors.
- **Highlighting Corporate Partnerships:** Sharing information about business sponsorships can attract corporate partners and increase club resources.

Building a Strong Brand

- **Visual Storytelling:** Using visually appealing posts, such as photos and videos, helps tell the club's story and capture attention.
- **Consistent Branding:** Using Kiwanis International's social media assets and branding resources helps create a consistent and professional online presence.
- **Sharing Club Stories:** Highlighting successful projects and member experiences demonstrates the value of being a Kiwanian.

As you can see, using social media effectively can significantly benefit a Kiwanis club by expanding its reach, attracting new members and partners, promoting community involvement, and strengthening its brand. Kiwanis International also provides resources to help clubs leverage social media effectively.

If you feel that your club has an outstanding Facebook page or newsletter, be sure to enter the district contest. The judging criteria and submission forms can be found on the district website, lamisstenn.org.

Please let me know if I can be of assistance in helping your club Build Our Brand. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me:

DonnaL100@yahoo.com.

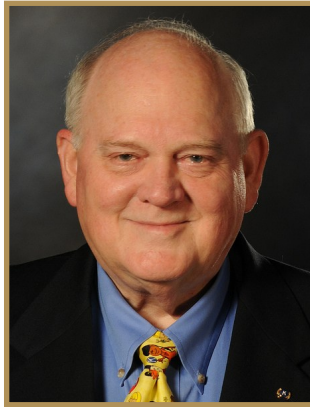
Aspire to Inspire: DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

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

When we hear the phrase "Dog Days of Summer," we think of those furnace-hot days of July and August in the South. According to "The Old Farmer's Almanac" the traditional Dog Days begin July 3rd and continue for about 40 days until August 11th. The Dog Days coincide with the sunrise appearance of the Dog Star, Sirius. Although the weather is not affected by the rising of Sirius, the Dog Star signaled the coming of the Nile's flooding season in ancient Egypt.

Forget about farming, history and astronomy in our LaMissTenn District we know the hot days begin earlier and go on into September. Certainly July, August and part of September could not be disputed as the hot "dog days of summer." As Ed McMahon would have asked Johnny Carson, "How hot is it?" ... "It's so hot you can fry an egg on the sidewalk." [I have done that.]

The weather reporter would say, "Expect hundred-degree days with high humidity and scattered thundershowers." A barefoot child would say, "If you are going to walk



on concrete, you better know how to hop, skip and run." So, why has this preamble rambled about summer heat when we all know well the "dog days of summer?"

Because these dog days correlate closely to the last three months of our Kiwanis year ... and because there is a natural tendency, especially in the South, to slow down activities because of the heat and humidity. School is out, vacations are enjoyed, we substitute salads for heavier foods, wear lighter clothes, seek fans and air-conditioning and drink lots of cold beverages.

What has that to do with the Kiwanis year and this July Newsletter? Because there is a natural tendency to slow down what we do for the children we serve. Club officers and leaders tend to "coast" toward the

end of "their year" ... not all, but lots. Don't let that happen to you.

The best leaders keep on leading right through their term of office just like runners don't relax and slow down on the last lap ... and like in a relay race, incoming Kiwanis club officers prepare themselves to grab the baton with a running start. They do that with participation in CLE ... Club Leadership Education (LaMissTenn provides many opportunities) and they do that by attending the District Convention.

The District Convention (DCON) is in Memphis August 8-10th. It is invaluable for club leaders who gain ideas, motivation, enthusiasm and lots, lots more ... and it's all wrapped in fun. (Elvis might even be there.) Register now and attend DCON. You and your club will be significantly better. Don't sit at home and fry eggs on your sidewalk. Crank up your enthusiasm and keep leading. Make a difference for the children in your community. Kids need Kiwanis and you.

Key Leader North 2025 is a Success!

By Linda Ramsey, Key Leader North Coordinator

On April 25-27, 2025, the 14th annual Kiwanis Key Leader North Event was held at Lakeshore Camp and Resort. We had 10 Student Facilitators, 47 Regular Student Participants, 16 Chaperones and 1 Lead Facilitator for a grand total of 73 participants. It was a wonderful group of students and adults, and our Lead Facilitator was Jane Erickson, Past Kiwanis International President. Jane is one of the authors of the Kiwanis Key Leader Program, and she did an outstanding job conveying the Curriculum to everyone in attendance.

Jane introduced something new to the curriculum this year for our students. She brought paint with her, and everyone in attendance made handprints. Throughout the curriculum, Jane referred to the handprints of the students and



asked them to think about where they might leave their hand prints on the world in the future. She kept them engaged throughout the weekend with all sorts of games and problem-solving activities.

We had more adds and drops in registration this year than usual, especially last minute. So, we are considering asking the students to provide a \$25 deposit toward their registration. This way they will have a vested interest to attend. The cost of the camp has increased consider-

ably, and that funding will help defray the cost and help prevent the need to increase the overall registration fee for next year.

Kiwanis Key Leader 2026 will be held on April 24-26, 2026 at Camp Lakeshore, and registration will be due on April 4, 2026. That will allow us some time for any changes or substitutions to be made prior to the printing of materials for the weekend. If you have any questions, please contact me either via email or by phone.

Sincerely,

Linda Ramsey

Key Leader North Coordinator

731-225-7729 Mramsey2@utm.edu





K-Kids are Amazing!

By Don Eye, K-Kids District Chair

As our DCON approaches in August, I invite all Kiwanians to consider attending and visiting Memphis. Elvis left years ago, but there is still much to enjoy. There are many restaurants and places to see. We have a great Zoo, Botanical Gardens, and the Bass Pro Shops are favored places to attend.

K-Kids completed two fund raisers by making and selling Boo Grams and Valentine Grams. They supported the hurricane victims in North Carolina who were hit with a devastating storm and flooding, and packed food boxes at the local food pantry. They also helped fund the Ryan Seacrest Foundation, and made Thank You Cards for our First Responders. The club members learned the importance of their combined efforts to accomplish greater giving.

A K-Kid will be speaking to our members Saturday morning at DCON. I will be heading a K-Kids training session later. K-Bear will be there and I hope to have a good program and offer what I have learned working with the younger SLPs. They are the seed to our future and I feel we should make them a priority. K-Kids are amazing!



BUILDER'S CLUB NEWS

LOUISIANA-MISSISSIPPI-WEST TENNESSEE DISTRICT OF KIWANIS

Builder's Club on the Move

*By Zandra Conner,
Amory Kiwanis Club President*

Kiwanis of Amory's **Builder's Club of Amory Middle School** was a little busy during the Spring months.

From helping pack bags for Kiwanis of Amory's Baxter Bags Backpack program, making happy signs for a teen that was air lifted to Le Bonheur Children's Hospital after a terrible car accident, making happy signs for Diversicare Nursing Home, fundraising for the backpack program at the Amory Railroad Festival, filling 500+ eggs for the four year olds of Monroe Early Learning Center, to buying and collecting new pairs of socks for River Place Nursing Home. These young people

truly have a heart of compassion. The Kiwanis advisor for the Builder's Club is Zandra Conner who was assisted sometimes by new member of the Club, Bridget Hatcher. Amory Middle School advisor of the club is Coach Carol Jones.



Aktion Club Comprised of Enthusiastic Learners

By Judy Couvillion, Aktion Club Administrator

Members of the Hammond Kiwanis Club count among the club's most treasured actions the founding of the **Hammond Kiwanis Aktion Club** at Options, a local agencies that serves special needs individuals in the community. Over the years, Aktion Club members have come to learn how to conduct meetings, have participated in field trips to local and area attractions, and have enjoyed social gatherings at different times of the year.

Over the past several months Aktion Club meetings, held at Options twice monthly, have been marked by a change that focuses on what the members can learn at these regular sessions. Kiwanians and others with special skills have been invited to share their knowledge with Aktion Club members. These programs have broadened the knowledge that Aktion Club members can learn while attending their regular meetings. At the same time, the offerings have been entertaining as well as informative.

One of the first such exhibitions was offered by Roy Blackwood, a member of the Hammond Kiwanis Club and a retired professor from Southeastern Louisiana University where he was department head in the university's Visual Arts Department. Blackwood, a talented sculpture, demonstrated how he carves



beautiful rocking horses from select woods. The Aktion Club members marveled at Blackwood's ability to create art from wood. Blackwood demonstrated the tools and techniques utilized by artisans who specialize in wood carving.

At another meeting, Ed Gautier, also a Kiwanian, presented a demonstration that focused on remembering items that one sees for a relatively brief period of time. Gautier divided the group into teams who were asked to look at a

random grouping of rather small objects for a specific amount of time. The participants were instructed to try and remember what they had seen. One team had the opportunity to examine the objects while the other team was sent to a different room. The two teams then switched places and Aktion Club members were then tested to see how many of the objects they remembered.



Continued on page 19

Aktion Club Comprised of Enthusiastic Learners Continued . . .

The exercise, known as Kim's Test, is frequently used by Boy Scout troops. Gautier has extensive experience with the scouts and was himself an Eagle Scout. He has also presented a knot tying demonstration, a class on how to handle and respect the nation's flag, and a demonstration on swimming pool safety.

Aktion Club members also learned a simple chemistry lesson from Kiwanian Terry King who demonstrated that a burning candle

flame can be extinguished by creating carbon dioxide from simple household chemicals. By mixing vinegar with baking soda, the resulting gas that comes from the combination will put out the burning candle when the gas from the combination is passed over the candle.

The new emphasis on making Aktion Club meetings more educational than social has been well received by the members and by the staff that works with the individuals. Placing the emphasis on educa-

tional programs should make the Aktion Club experience even more fulfilling and meaningful said King about this shift in emphasis at club meetings.



KEY CLUB NEWS

LOUISIANA-MISSISSIPPI-WEST TENNESSEE DISTRICT OF KIWANIS

Amory Kiwanis Awards Key Club Scholarships

By Zandra Conner, Amory Kiwanis Club President



This year, Kiwanis of Amory awarded six \$500 J.S. Abney Memorial Scholarships. Each year the club awards high school students that qualify according to their involvement in our Key Club, service in the community, and have outstanding achievements in school. Recognition of the awardees took place on Tuesday, May 6, 2025, during the ceremony to recognize the seniors of the Key Club of Amory High School, at First Baptist Church of Amory at 5:30pm. Kiwanis Advisors of the Key Club of Amory High are Leslie Wise and Penny Leech. High school advisor for the club is Rachael Sibley. The recipients for 2024-2025 school year are: (pictured left to right) Bess Boykin, Noah Cocker, and Carolanne Alsup; not pictured are Libby Gosa, Chloe Murphy, and Bryson Walters.

Ascension Kiwanis: May the Fourth be with You!

By Tiffany LaPorte & Donna Leggett, Ascension Kiwanis Club

Twenty-seven teams totaling 135 bowlers participated in the **Ascension Kiwanis Club's** 4th Annual Bowling Tournament on Sunday May 4th at Premier Lanes in Gonzales, LA. This year's theme was *May the Fourth be with You*.

Congratulations to the winners of our 4th Annual Bowling Tournament: 1st Place The Strike Walkers from Picou Builders Supply, 2nd Place The Bowling Stones, and 3rd Place May the Force Keep You Out of The Gutter with LSU Kiwanis Club.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all donors who contributed items for our silent auction and door prizes. This year, we received over sixty items. We appreciate the participation of our bowlers in supporting our fundraiser, making this year's event the most successful to date.



Our bowling tournament co-chairs Kristin Rosendale (a.k.a. Princess Leia), and Judy Stracener.

Through your generosity, we can fund our projects that serve children.

Participating in bowling for a good cause fosters community engagement. We had teams comprised of families, businesses for team building, Kiwanis Clubs, Key Clubs, scouts, organizations, and friends

who sought to strike up a good time while supporting our Kiwanis club. Everyone had a great time bowling and creating memories. Thank you all for making this annual event possible. Save the date for May 3, 2026, and we will do it again!



Patrick, Gary & Doug on door prize duty



Donna, Dylan & Tiffany at registration



Ascension Kiwanis Club members



And that's a strike for the Storm Trooper!

Cortana Cares!

By Wanda Magee,
Cortana Kiwanis Club

WORLD FAMOUS JAMBALAYA

Teams of **Cortana Kiwanis** members cooked pots of the club's World Famous Jambalaya at several events.

On June 11th, they headed out to cook for Camp Character at Avondale Scout Reservation in Clinton, LA. With the help of retired Boy Scouts Director Mr. Tyrone Black and Baton Rouge Constable's Office representative Ms. Carla Green, they cooked 150 full meals for inner city children attending a one week camp. The camp provides skills, meals and leadership classes. The children participate in such things as rock climbing, archery, BB gun safety, teamwork, manners, and character.

On June 14th, a Cortana cook crew prepared approximately 200 servings for the *Fathers on a Mission Program* honoring all fathers with a special spotlight on new and expecting dads. The theme was "Celebrating Fatherhood."

On April 26th, four Cortana Kiwanis members cooked and served approximately 450 participants at the *Annual Baton Rouge Corvette Club St. Jude Open Car Show*. One hundred percent of the proceeds from the car show entry fee, food sales, raffle tickets, silent and live auctions, etc. benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.



END OF YEAR PARTY

Cortana Kiwanis helped approximately 75 members of the Boys & Girls Club celebrate the end of the school year with pizza, cookies, and juice. Afterwards, they went to the gym where DJ Bob played music for dancing, running around and having fun.



MIGHTY MOMS

Tammy McDavid and Michelle White presented a \$1,000 check to Dawn Birdsong of Mighty Moms, a local non-profit which feeds hungry children and families in Livingston Parish through several projects during the year.



TEACHER APPRECIATION

We love our teachers and staff at Broadmoor Elementary and appreciate everything they do for the "Lil Bucs". Continuing a yearly tradition, Cortana Kiwanis recognized them during Teacher Appreciation Week! Monday, May 5, Pam and Wanda delivered snacks, tea and water to the teacher's lounge!

KEY CLUB

Cortana Kiwanis members had a successful inter-club meeting with Helix Mentorship STEAM Academy Key Club. The meeting focused on: Food Bank service project, Bowling Team for an upcoming Kiwanis club fundraiser, 2025-2026 officers, and Key Club Pins.



BUGS

Cortana Kiwanis sponsors a Bring Up Grades (BUG) program at Broadmoor Elementary. Students in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades who brought up their grades were rewarded with a party at the end of the year. The names of six lucky students were drawn to win a bicycle and a helmet.



Division 13 Teams up to Feed Special Olympians

By Judy & Vic Couvillion, Hammond Kiwanis Club

Once again Kiwanians from Division 13 were asked to feed approximately 400 Special Olympic athletes, their sponsors and coaches who were participating in the state games held on the campus of Southeastern Louisiana University from May 23-25. As the Kiwanians have done for the previous two years, they eagerly replied with a positive, "Yes!"

On Sunday, May 25, at about 5 a.m. the volunteers began to assemble for the morning breakfast for some very special athletes. Kiwanis members from the **Hammond, Ponchatoula, Covington** and **East Livingston** (Div. 8E) **Clubs**, armed with spatulas, batter mixers, griddles, and assorted equipment were quickly at work cooking sausages first and then the pancakes. Other Kiwanians were busily assembling a serving line where the main breakfast items along with health bars, butter, syrup, utensils, fresh fruit and breakfast beverages were doled out to the hungry Olympians.

Once again feeding participants in the Special Olympics Louisiana State Games afforded Kiwanis members a great volunteer opportunity to perform service to a group of very deserving special citizens. The state games have a very significant impact on athletes with



disabilities who come from throughout the state for a weekend of fun and games that for many are the highlight of their year. As the athletes came through the line for their plates of food they were all too eager to show off the medals that they had won over the previous days of competition.

Serving began at 6:30 a.m. and by about 9:00 a.m. the morning's big project had all but been completed. The breakfast was accomplished quickly and efficiently because of the many volunteer Kiwanians who willingly gave up a few hours of sleep to be of assistance to others.

For the past couple years, Division 13 has had a wonderful time serving at the pancake breakfast. Judy Couvillion of the Hammond Kiwanis Club, who helped coordinate the event, said of the morning's project, "We had an awesome turn out from our Kiwanis Clubs and Special Olympics Louisiana was

once again grateful for our contribution. The smiles on the faces of the athletes and the thanks from their sponsors, coaches and family members were more than enough reward for our efforts. Kiwanis and SLU have a long history of involvement in Special Olympics and it was an honor and privilege to be part of such a wonderful event once again."

In addition to being of service to Special Olympics, the breakfast offers one of the few opportunities for a number of clubs to come together for good cause.



Dyersburg: Burgers in the Park

By Sandy Tarkington, Dyersburg Kiwanis Club

On June 4, 2025 the **Kiwanis Club of Dyersburg** hosted its third annual Burgers in the Park event, bringing together community members for a day of fun, food, and fellowship. Held at Kiwanis Park in Dyersburg, the event attracted families, friends, and businesses eager to enjoy a great lunch for a good cause.

Thanks to the generous support of local businesses and volunteers, the Burgers in the Park event raised essential funds for enhancements to Kiwanis Park. President Kristol Sentell stated, "These funds will directly support initiatives to improve the quality of the park that bears our name."

Club members work with the City of Dyersburg to coordinate renovation and additions to Kiwanis Park.



Germantown Kiwanis: Operation Park Bench

By Susan Olsson, Germantown Kiwanis Club

Since inception, Kiwanians have been living our mission by making the world a better place, one child and one community at a time. When Claude Vinson began his term as governor, he initiated Operation Park Bench in the hopes that Kiwanis would install benches in every city and town that has a Kiwanis Club. This would provide a quiet place for people to rest and would be a reminder of the caring spirit of Kiwanis Clubs across the district.



The LaMissTenn Kiwanis Foundation provides a grant of \$1000 to pay for a bench and a few clubs have taken advantage of this, but there is more money available. There are also community service grants if more than one is needed.

Germantown Kiwanis was awarded a foundation community service grant of \$5,000 towards the purchase of 12 benches at Municipal Park. Benches were placed around the newly renovated play area along the sidewalk so parents can watch their children play. Club members purchased individual benches, and a brass plaque was placed to honor the person of their choice.

The family and friends of Sewel Dunkin, a member of Kiwanis for 40+ years purchased a bench shortly after he died. His son, Stuart had this to say, "This bench is more than a seat. It is a place to pause, reflect, smile, and re-



member. It invites the weary to rest, the lonely to find peace, and the joyful to share a moment together - just as Dad would have wanted"



Greenville Celebrates Excellence

By Angela Crooms, Greenville Kiwanis Club

The Kiwanis Club of Greenville proudly continues its tradition of recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of exceptional high school seniors in our community. This year, we are honored to award five graduating seniors from three local high schools with our annual Kiwanis Scholarship.

The selection process for our Scholarship Committee is based on a detailed evaluation of academic performance and community involvement. Applicants are required to submit a completed application form, an official transcript with verification from a school counselor, and an essay reflecting on their future goals.

The scholarships were awarded during our annual Scholarship Luncheon, held on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, at 12:00 p.m. at the GGCC. The event



was a celebration of academic excellence, as family members and club members gathered to honor these outstanding students. Retired Methodist Minister Tom Atkins gave an encouraging message to the recipients and Kiwanis Club President Jan Vaughn presented each scholarship award, while Lt. Governor Tracy Cameron

joined us to offer her congratulations to the recipients.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to uplifting the next generation of leaders. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to this year's recipients. Together, we are making a lasting investment in the future of our community.

New Orleans Kiwanis Serves Meals from the Heart

By Cathy Simmons, New Orleans Kiwanis Club



Meals from the Heart is a wonderful service project that our club does for our local Ronald McDonald House, here in New Orleans. This quarter, we did "Taco Tuesday" for our families! **Kiwanis Club of New Orleans** cooked up a variety of choices for the Taco Bar ... seasoned ground meat, sauteed shrimp & spices, along with traditional toppings like tomatoes, lettuce, cheese, onions, guacamole, salsa and sour cream. Simple as can be! We fed 50 people for under \$225, and even had left overs! Check out YOUR local Ronald McDonald House or children's hospital and get cooking! Don't want to cook? Offer to supply "grab and go" snacks for the families as they spend hours with their kids for medical treatment!

Hammond Kiwanis Happy Bags

By Judy & Vic Couvillion, Hammond Kiwanis Club

The Hammond Kiwanis Club counts as its, “signature project,” the preparation and delivery of easy-eat-food items to pre-K and kindergarten pupils enrolled in the club’s adopted school, Woodland Park Elementary. The club completed another successful year of providing its Hammond Kiwanis Happy Bags with conclusion of the school year.

During the past year, 208 bags were filled with nine food and drink items for 28 weeks for a grand total of 5,684 bags that were provided so that the youngsters would have something to eat on the weekends. A little bit of math indicates that the club provided approximately 159,152 food items to the children.

The program started more than a decade ago when two members attending a LaMissTenn District Convention of Kiwanis International heard of a similar program elsewhere. When inquiring about needs at the adopted school, it was learned that the teachers were stockpiling simple snacks for little children who reported for school on Monday mornings hungry because they had had little to eat on weekends when school meals were not available.



Over the years Hammond Kiwanians perfected the project making improvements each year such as moving from backpacks to plastic shopping bags. The move made for a much more efficient operational program. Albertson’s donates the bags for the weekly, “fillings.”

Procuring the food items is a task left up to veteran Kiwanis member Judy Couvillion who spends her Saturday

mornings searching out bargain locations for purchase of the items needed to fill the bags. Dollar General, with its coupons, is a frequent target of her quest.

On Thursdays mornings a team of Kiwanians gathers to fill that week’s bags and the operation is usually completed in about an hour. “Our Kiwanis Happy Bags program involves a lot of work but it is most rewarding. When we visit the school at the end of the year the little children can’t wait to greet us. They are all smiles and hugs when told that we are the ones who provide them with the bag full of oodles each week. It’s most rewarding. As the mission statement goes, ‘...one child and one community at a time.’ This is one way we serve some of the children in our community” according to Judy Couvillion.



Opelousas: Doing Great Things!

*By Carrie Richard,
Opelousas Kiwanis Club*

LOVE THE BOOT

On April 10, 2025, the **Opelousas Kiwanis Club** and the St. Landry Chamber of Commerce partnered to host a litter cleanup event as part of Louisiana's Love the Boot Week. This cleanup effort was among many across Louisiana during the week of April 5th-13th, a statewide initiative for litter removal and beautification. Club members Carrie Richard and Lori Dupuis participated in this effort along with two members from our Youth Leadership Council, Ms. Gabby Jones and Ms. Maiya Robertson.



BBQ FUNDRAISER

On April 25th, our 2nd Annual BBQ Fundraiser, was held at St. Landry Bank and Trust Company's Annex Building. We spent 2 months in preparation gathering donations to prepare 650 BBQ Pork Steak plates, which included, rice dressing, baked beans, a slice of



bread and a chocolate chip cookie.

Of the 22 members we have on hand, we had full participation. For 3 of our newest members, this was their first fundraising event with us and we are grateful for the additional help of our volunteers.

Thanks you to our sponsors. Without the help of our sponsors and donations, this wouldn't have been so successful.

CELEBRATING 3RD GRADERS

The Opelousas Kiwanis Club's Signature Service Project was revitalized a few years ago thanks to the initiative of Shelly Fontenot, current Board President, and Pamela Vidrine, President-Elect. Their shared vision was to honor third-grade students across St. Landry Parish for their hard work—especially those who are often overlooked and come from underserved communities.

The project recognizes students from eight schools celebrating 81 third-grade students.

Each nine-weeks, Kiwanis representatives collaborate with school administrators to identify students who demonstrate dedication and effort. These students receive a Kiwanis Certificate of Achievement along with a gift card generously donated by local sponsors.

At the end of the school year, each school selects one boy and one girl



from the pool of recognized students to receive a special award. Winners are gifted a brand-new bicycle or a \$100 Visa gift card.

Our efforts have not gone unnoticed. This past year, Kiwanis International contacted me, as Club Secretary, after reading an article about our project. They invited us to apply for a grant to help support and grow our initiative for the 2024–2025 school year. That grant was successful in helping us to achieve our goals and serve an additional 9 students this school year.

SCHOLARSHIP

On April 9th, St. Landry Chamber of Commerce hosted scholarship interviews for our high school seniors in St. Landry Parish. Kiwanis has continuously donated a \$500.00 scholarship for a student who is community service oriented. Carrie Richard, Secretary of the Kiwanis Club of Opelousas, conducted the interviews of the high school students on behalf of the Kiwanis Club.

The student selected to win the \$500.00 scholarship was Lauren Polk, who is graduating from Magnet Arts & Cultural Academy in Opelousas, Louisiana. She is going to be pursuing a degree to become a veterinarian. She demonstrated her leadership skills by being the student body president as well as mentored incoming freshmen and did social media for Interact Club.



Annual Red Stick Club Golf Classic Memorializes Contributions of Late Kiwanian Charlie Breard

By Tommy Darensbourg, Red Stick Kiwanis Club

For the fifth consecutive year, Charles V. Breard will be remembered when 100-plus golfers, sponsors, and **Red Stick Kiwanis Club** members and friends gather this fall for the 25th Annual Charles Breard Memorial Golf Classic in Baton Rouge. The event generates funds that benefit numerous nonprofit community service organizations that serve children and families in the Capital Region.

Breard, who died in October 2020 at age 84, was the consummate Kiwanian: Joining Red Stick in 1978, he served as president and board member, challenged every member to participate in club activities and recruit new members, secured sponsorships for fundraisers, and always photographed meetings and events to record memories, including the golf tournament that now bears his name. Breard's lengthy dedicated service earned him a Lifetime

Achievement Award in 2019.

Thomas Gibbs, whose friendship with Breard spanned over four decades, called Charlie "an incredible person, an excellent role model for any Kiwanian to emulate. As the cheerleader and historian, he relentlessly spurred members into action."

Gibbs noted: Charlie would "challenge decisions that sometimes were not particularly wise. While always a diplomat," he was keen on "scrutinizing club budgets and weighing the merits of each expenditure."

Breard praised members for their personal, professional, and Kiwanis accomplishments, consistently reminding all that the club's "higher calling" was to improve the lives of children and the community and do good deeds. He once told this writer "you get out of Kiwanis what you put into it."



Married for 63 years, Peggy and the late Charles Breard were "a winning formula for the Red Stick Club," according to long-time friend and fellow Kiwanian Thomas Gibbs. Today, Mrs. Breard and her family continue to enthusiastically support the Red Stick Annual Golf Classic that bears her late husband's name and love for Kiwanis.

Author's Note: The Breard Golf Classic occurs Thursday, October 16, 2025 at Santa Maria Golf Course, Baton Rouge.

Info: Event Chair Matt Robinson, jmattrobinson71@gmail.com



Tupelo Provides Funding for Book Vending Machines

By Fred Pitts, Tupelo Kiwanis Club

The **Tupelo Kiwanis Club** recently donated \$19,000 to Tupelo Public Schools to purchase books to fill vending machines for grades kindergarten through 6th. Students now have greater access to high-quality, engaging books that spark their imaginations and foster a lifelong love of reading. The book machines have become a centerpiece of excitement and motivation.

Terrific Kids, Teens & Pancakes

By Tracy Duplantier, St. Bernard –Arabi Kiwanis Club



The St. Bernard-Arabi Kiwanis Club is grateful to Valero Refinery for sponsoring the Terrific Kids and Teens Program for all of St. Bernard Parish schools again this year! Valero's support makes possible this impactful program which recognizes approximately 3,320 students. Terrific Kids and Teens is a student recognition program promoting character development, self-esteem, and perseverance.

"TERRIFIC" stands for thoughtful, enthusiastic, respectful, responsible, inclusive, friendly, inquisitive, and capable. The program helps build good community members,

friends, leaders, etc. Students are selected monthly by their teachers and are recognized with a short narrative about what makes them Terrific. They also receive a certificate, a shirt, and a yard sign.



St. Bernard-Arabi Kiwanis member Jude Meyers prepares the sausage.

Pancake Breakfast volunteers

Our Club was overjoyed to come together at the annual pancake breakfast in May to celebrate all of this year's Terrific Kids and Teens recipients. We enjoyed cheering for each student by name as they entered the breakfast!

We would also like to thank the Fire Department for bringing the smoke house, the CHS Key Club for volunteering in the craft area, and Community Coffee for being on hand to keep us caffeinated! Congratulations to all of this year's Terrific Kids and Teens!

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 separately 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 deadline for the next issue is:

Oct 2025 Issue = Deadline Sept 15, 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"
is the official publication of the
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