



# NEWS

January 2026



**LaMissTenn Governors Sizzle on the Griddle at the Baton Rouge Kiwanis Pancake Festival**

*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**

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## ON THE COVER:

LaMissTenn Governor Marcel Lashover (center) flips pancakes with Past Governors Bruce Hammatt and Gary Graham at the Baton Rouge Pancake Festival.

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# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

By Marcel Lashover, Governor

Happy New Year, LaMissTenn Kiwanis Members,

Your district leadership, Governor-Elect Andrew, Vice Governor Laura, your Lieutenant Governor, and I have been busy in the 1st quarter of 2025-2026 helping your district grow toward our goal of 4000 members by the end of September 2026.

We have been crossing the district installing clubs, hosting dinners/meetings, talking to clubs, and helping clubs grow/strengthen their membership so they can serve more kids in their local communities. If you haven't seen or heard from the team yet, that is ok because you will. If you

need help with something or have questions, don't hesitate to get in touch with your lieutenant governor or one of us.

This year, we will be opening at least 4 new clubs and have already started that by opening the 1<sup>st</sup> club, Morehouse Kiwanis Club, with close to 30 new members.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> club we will open is in Cleveland, MS, with the Greenville, MS, club sponsoring in the middle of January 2026. So, if you know someone in that area who would like to join, let me or our team know.

Also, if your club is interested in sponsoring and supporting a new club, please reach out to Jen Robertson to learn what you need to do to make it happen. Thanks for stepping up.

I want to thank the team led by Lieutenant Governor Milisa York for just completing the 2025 Key Leader South weekend with about 40 young

leaders. We are looking forward to next year, so stay tuned!

Past Governor John Fry, your District Membership Chair, has been busy working with our past governors and the Past District Officers Organization to drive more district growth and meet our goal this year.

Remember, every new member we bring into Kiwanis means we can help more kids in your community. So, please support your club and community.

I will continue to ask you 1<sup>st</sup> to do your part by joining me, Andrew, Laura, your Trustees, and Lieutenant Governors in the year 2025-2026 to keep asking your friends, business associates, and family to join Kiwanis for the kids.

If you need help, please reach out to any one of us. I can be reached at [lamisstenngov2526@gmail.com](mailto:lamisstenngov2526@gmail.com) or by cell at 504-272-1600.

## The Governor in Action ...



Governor Marcel volunteers at Kiwanis Pancake Breakfasts across the District. Pictured from left to right, Marcel flips pancakes in Laurel, MS, visits with Division 13 Lieutenant Governor Chelsea Brumfield and LA Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser in Ponchatoula, LA, and works the griddle with Past Governors Bruce Hammatt and Gary Graham in Baton Rouge, LA.

## Teamwork and Engagement

*By Andrew Dozier, Governor-Elect*



Leadership is the heartbeat of any organization. It influences the atmosphere, shapes goals, and directly affects every individual's experience within the club and community. Some leaders seem to leave a mark that lasts, inspiring their members to contribute their best and embrace meaningful change.

This is the essence of impact leadership. These leaders don't simply give directions, they create an atmosphere where members feel empowered to explore ideas and take ownership of their roles in the club.

Clubs can function effectively when team-building skills, motivation, effective communication and inclusiveness are practiced.

We deliver value to our Kiwanis clubs when service and fun activities are planned and marketed, so the community knows what Kiwanis is and does and membership strength remains consistent. Does your club have these good habits?

As I travel across LaMissTenn visiting clubs, I'm excited to report that I am truly inspired by the teamwork, engagement, commitment and creativity of our members and leadership. Clubs are surely making service the hallmark of their communities!

I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Kiwanis Club of Greenville for their hospitality. Thanks to President Cameron, Membership Chair Gines, and Board member Davenport, for setting up my visit agenda. It was a great visit!

Branding and marketing our clubs in our communities will define the Kiwanis mission and goals. Kiwanis brings a positive influence creating opportunities for our children.

As the 2nd Quarter approaches, we must focus on retaining our members. Please review your club membership plan and make it a priority to increase our membership.

Combined effort achieves more than individual talent. It emphasizes unity, shared vision and mutual support for uncommon results. "The strength of a team is each individual, the strength of each member is the team."



### Kiwanis Club of Greenville







## WHO ENCOURAGED YOU TO BECOME A KIWANIAN?

*By Laura Gilliland, Vice Governor*

My Kiwanis sponsor Charlie Jordan passed away Wednesday, January 8, 2025. He would have been in the Kiwanis Club of Red Stick 55 years March 6, 2025, and he would have been 85 years young April 3rd. We used to refer to each other as “brother” and “sister.” I always kidded, “He’s my brother, and he ain’t heavy!”

Charlie made an impact on my life and did so much, that I only hope I am able to pay it forward to others. I first met Charlie using him as my appraiser in real estate. He did countless favors for me. He measured the interior of homes, helped me find a house when I was as lost as a goose, and gave me advice when I had nowhere else to turn. Only a “brother” would be so KIND and empathetic. He was a man of few words, but his advice was always very wise.

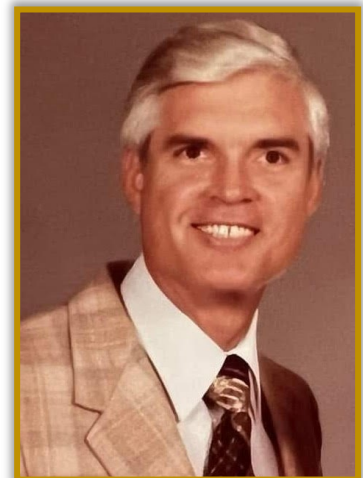
Charlie served in the United

States Coast Guard. He later served in Kiwanis as Distinguished President, Distinguished Lieutenant Governor, and did an exemplary job of recruiting new members. He also put together an award-winning newsletter for years, and being an avid photographer, he took photos at the Kiwanis Installations, Initiations, Fundraisers, and Service Projects. He was the epitome of what every Kiwanian should strive to be.

Charlie was enthusiastic about life and his smile was contagious. He earned his wings in Heaven years and years ago, and no doubt they’re made out of platinum and diamonds. When Charlie entered the pearly gates, I’m certain God told him how proud He was for the countless kindnesses that he showed others.

Introducing me to Kiwanis and encouraging me every step of the way, Charlie changed my life. Who encouraged you to become a Kiwanian? Reach out and let that

person know how much you appreciate the compassion that was shown to you, and in turn, look for others around you that you can encourage to become Kiwanians.



*Charlie Jordan, 1940-2025*  
*Red Stick Kiwanis*

# Say Hello to My Lil Friend

*By Claude Vinson, Immediate Past Governor*



Hey! Y'all remember that famous line in the movie Scarface; just when Tony Montana started unleashing chaos on his adversaries and mayhem ensued? Classic!

In this introduction, it's not about that drama, but about welcoming a new and loveable member to our district-community with all the excitement that iconic line inspires.

I'd like to introduce you to my little friend, **Capt'n Kee Wan Nee**, the loveable, magical park bench, commander of conversations, colonel of clever jokes, lieutenant of laughter, sergeant of storytelling and inspirational tales, papal of people connection, and the secretary of hospitality and comfort, who summons the gentle

breezes on hot days and offering a welcoming seat to all; making everyone feel at home.

His presence will evoke acts of kindness and togetherness, as stories from our district from around the world are shared and celebrated, sparking new friendships and a sense of belonging.

Through these unique monikers—storytelling, hospitality, and inspirational stories—Capt'n Kee Wan Nee transforms a park bench, into the heart of all of our communities; fostering joy and unity for all who enjoy a simple sit and respite.

Hey LaMissTenn! YOU have the opportunity to purchase park benches as a unique way to enhance YOUR communities and sponsoring an inspired/honored bench. YOUR clubs can create lasting gathering spots that encourage interaction, storytelling, and a sense of togetherness. These Kiwanis themed park benches can be customized with YOUR club branding or inspirational messages/

dedications, making them a visible symbol of Kiwanis' commitment to fostering connection and positivity in neighborhoods everywhere.

For those clubs who have purchased park benches in recognition of its members, or to just signify to their community that Kiwanis is here and we are here to stay... THANK YOU!

So, next time you need a place to rest, swap stories, or just plot your own friendly neighborhood takeover, remember: Capt'n Kee Wan Nee is always standing... well, sitting... at attention. Take a seat, laugh a little louder, and let's keep making our communities and playgrounds awesome—one bench at a time!





# January 2026 Check-In

**Register NOW for 2026 Mid-Year Education Conference!**



*Mark Your  
Calendar!*

**2026 Mid-Year  
Education Conference  
March 21, 2026  
Natchitoches, LA**

***Want to learn more about Kiwanis? Want to see your favorite fellow Kiwanis friends?***

***Want to try Natchitoches' famous meat pies?***

Early Registration is \$40 and closes **Feb 20th**. Late Registration is \$50/person and closes **Mar 11th**. Registration includes a LIGHT BREAKFAST (fresh fruit, muffins, Danishes, & coffee) and LUNCH (Southern fried catfish, meat pies, potatoes, Cajun Maque Choux corn, salad, banana pudding). Please include any dietary restrictions on your registration form.

Clubs that have chartered since last year's Mid-Year (April 2025) are eligible for *FOUR free registrations through the New Club Attendance Incentive*. Contact the District Office at [districtoffice@lamisstenn.org](mailto:districtoffice@lamisstenn.org) to take advantage!

Visit the Mid-Year 2026 webpage for details and registration:

**MID-YEAR 2026 WEBPAGE**

# SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATE

**Show your Kiwanis pride with a  
LaMissTenn Kiwanis District specialty license plate!**

The District is working with all our states on a specialty license plate for your motor vehicle. Find the design and order form [HERE](#) for the State of Mississippi. The District must pre-sell 300 tags before production begins.

Louisiana and Tennessee plates coming soon!



**DCON 2026**

**Kenner, LA  
July 31 - August 2**

## LaMissTenn Club Activities Calendar

Does your club have great service projects and fundraisers! Of course it does!

Let the District and other clubs know by submitting your events to the LaMissTenn Club Activities Calendar [HERE](#). This calendar's purpose is to promote LaMissTenn club events and projects outside of routine club meetings.

The LaMissTenn Club Activities Calendar can be found on the LaMissTenn website under the District Calendar [HERE](#).







## The Power of Healthy Membership: Why Strong Clubs Build Stronger Communities

*By John Fry, District Membership Chair*

Healthy membership is the heartbeat of any service organization. For clubs like Kiwanis, membership is not just a number, it is the engine that drives every project, every act of kindness, and every dream we have for our communities. Without people, passion, and participation, even the best ideas remain just that: ideas. But when a club is vibrant, engaged, and growing, the possibilities multiply.

Every service organization has a mission. In Kiwanis, that mission centers on improving the lives of children and strengthening communities. But no club—no matter how dedicated—can fulfill its mission without people who are willing to step forward and serve.

Healthy membership provides:

- **People power:** More hands to pack meals, mentor students, build ramps, or host fundraisers.
- **Fresh ideas:** New members bring new perspectives, energy, and creativity.
- **Sustainability:** A steady flow of members ensures programs continue year after year.
- **Stronger impact:** When more people serve, more needs can be met—plain and simple.

Without membership, even the most enthusiastic club risks burnout, limited reach, and lost opportunities to help.

Most of us joined Kiwanis for one

reason: we care about our communities and want to make a positive difference. But we stay because of the joy we feel when we serve—joy that comes from seeing a child smile, watching a family in need find relief, or knowing our small action made someone's day brighter.

Inviting new people to join us is not about boosting numbers. It is about offering others the chance to experience what we have experienced:

- The satisfaction of giving back.
- The friendships formed through shared service
- The sense of purpose that comes from being part of something bigger than ourselves.

When we share our passion, we are not just asking someone to join a club, we are giving them the opportunity to make their community—and their own life—better.

Imagine the projects we already do—and how much more we could accomplish with even a few additional members.

- **Backpack or school supply drives:** With more volunteers sorting donations, more children can start the school year prepared.
- **Community clean-ups:** Twice as many people means twice as many streets, parks, or neighborhoods refreshed.
- **Holiday food baskets:** More helping hands equals more families receiving the support they need during tough seasons.
- **Reading or mentoring programs:** Additional volunteers allow us to

reach more classrooms, more students, and more futures.

- **Fundraisers:** Large events—from pancake breakfasts to charity auctions—become easier to plan and more successful with a bigger team.

Every project becomes stronger and more sustainable when membership is strong.

Growing a club does not happen by accident. It happens when each of us becomes an ambassador for service—sharing our story, inviting others to join us, and showing our communities what's possible when people come together for a common purpose.

We do not need to make grand speeches or put people on the spot. Sometimes all it takes is saying: "I love what Kiwanis does for our community. Would you like to join us sometime?"

A simple invitation can change lives—just as someone's invitation once changed ours.

**Conclusion: Together, We Serve Better**

Healthy membership is not just important, it is essential. It strengthens our programs, deepens our impact, and ensures that the service we love continues for future generations. When we share our passion and invite others into our mission, we amplify the good we can do.

Our communities are counting on us. And with more hands, more hearts, and more members, there is no limit to the joy we can bring and the difference we can make.

Yours in Service,

**DMC John**

# WELCOME TO THE KIWANIS FAMILY!

*Reflects new membership from 10/1/25 to 12/22/25.*

Michelle Achord-Wright, *Walker*  
 Alexis Albarado, *Southwest Louisiana*  
 Dawson Archer, *Columbus*  
 David Ash, *Third District*  
 Chrystal Barnhill, *Alexandria*  
 Debra Barton, *Morehouse*  
 Steve Bernard, *Walker*  
 Maegan Black, *Tupelo*  
 Angela Briley, *Opelousas*  
 Elizabeth Broekman, *Dawn Busters*  
 Clinton Broussard, *Alexandria*  
 Genie Brower, *East St. Mary*  
 Bruce Brown, *Union City*  
 Justin Brown, *Ruston*  
 Teri Bryan, *Tupelo*  
 Bryan Carson, *Bluff City*  
 Sara Carter, *Gulfport*  
 Lisa Chafford, *Morehouse*  
 Melissa Chauppette, *Plaquemines*  
 Michael Clark, *Walker*  
 Jennifer Cloud, *Morehouse*  
 Cornelia Coburn, *Louisville*  
 Matt Coleman, *Greater Ouachita*  
 Chris Collins, *Northshore Mandeville*  
 Denise Cooper, *Plaquemines*  
 Christopher Daniel, *Gulfport*  
 Bella Dardano, *Dawn Busters*  
 Joshua Daye, *Pine Belt*  
 Colleen Doran, *Big Easy*  
 Rosalyn Duley, *Tri Parishes*  
 Jeffrey Duplantis, *Lafayette*  
 Wendy Dutel, *Third District*  
 Lenell Edmonds, *Morehouse*  
 James Ellingburg, *Morehouse*  
 Chandler Flowers, *Morehouse*  
 Catherine Furr, *Central*  
 Elizabeth Getzinger, *NW St. Tammany*  
 Samantha Grafton Duncan, *Laurel*  
 Darry Green, *Morehouse*  
 Rick Grimmett, *Morehouse*  
 Mary Guirovich, *Moisant*  
 Andrea Gunter, *Tupelo*  
 Windy Haist, *Ponchatoula*

Tyler Hales, *Central*  
 Dalton Hallman, *Pearl*  
 Randall Hart, *Zachary*  
 Brandi Hatchell, *Walker*  
 Sheneka Hatfield, *Morehouse*  
 Christopher Hill, *Tupelo*  
 Ali Hobby, *Lucedale*  
 Stephen Hoosier, *Alexandria*  
 Courtney Jennings, *Opelousas*  
 Crue Jimeivez, *Amory*  
 Ali Johns, *Plaquemines*  
 Tracey Joubert, *Opelousas*  
 Cindy Joyner, *Moisant*  
 Kay King, *Morehouse*  
 Ann Knapp, *South Lake Charles*  
 Mattie Knowles, *Louisville*  
 Steven LaPorte, *Ascension*  
 Emma Laussade, *Sulphur*  
 Shawanna Lavall, *Morehouse*  
 Fletcher LeJeune, *Lafayette*  
 Cindi Lessard, *Dawn Busters*  
 Carol Lord, *Morehouse*  
 Sarah Lott, *DeRidder*  
 Marko Marjanovic, *Dawn Busters*  
 Rachel Marsh, *Natchitoches*  
 Jordan Mason, *Tupelo*  
 Connor McCue, *Northshore Mandeville*  
 Amanda McDaniel, *Ponchatoula*  
 Johnny McDonald, *Laurel*  
 Susan McMahan, *Tupelo*  
 Lisa Morgan, *Southwest Louisiana*  
 Ted Morley, *Germantown*  
 Clay Morris, *Central*  
 Jason Mouton, *Bayou Teche*  
 Mickey Nicholson, *Rayville*  
 Thomas Nicholson, *Rayville*  
 Donna O'Kelley, *East St. Mary*  
 Shannon Penn, *Rankin County*  
 Nicolas Perkin, *Greater Ouachita*  
 Trenton Perkins, *Morehouse*  
 Dennis Philebar, *Pearl*  
 Regina Picquet, *Plaquemines*  
 Pam Pontoppidan, *New Orleans*

Jason Preuett, *Central*  
 Rhett Pritchard, *St. Bernard-Arabi*  
 Daniel Pruitt, *DeRidder*  
 Tanya Pulver, *Central*  
 Jessica Raines, *Dawn Busters*  
 Leondrio Reed, *Morehouse*  
 Kelsey Richard, *Southwest Louisiana*  
 Cara Richardson, *Plaquemines*  
 Alberta Richardson, *Morehouse*  
 Shanndolyn Richardson, *Bluff City*  
 Lamonze Robinson, *Morehouse*  
 Haley Robinson, *Paris-Lakeway*  
 Mike Ross, *Moisant*  
 Kanitta Ruiz, *NW St. Tammany*  
 JoAnn Scott, *Dawn Busters*  
 Todd Sibley, *Walker*  
 Christy Sloan, *Central*  
 Carlee Smiley, *Central*  
 Matthew Stephens, *Greater Ouachita*  
 Alton Stone, *Central*  
 Veronica Tappin, *Morehouse*  
 Katherine Thimmesch, *Plaquemines*  
 Dorothy Thomas, *Morehouse*  
 Hunter Thomas, *Morehouse*  
 Brittany Tolley, *Paris-Lakeway*  
 Samuel Tolley, *Paris-Lakeway*  
 Karlessa Truxillo, *Ascension*  
 Deanna Tubbs, *Morehouse*  
 Eric Tucker, *DeRidder*  
 Edgar Voiselle, *Alexandria*  
 Cory Wagner, *St. Bernard-Arabi*  
 Scott Walker, *Dawn Busters*  
 Crit Williams, *Natchitoches*  
 Adrin Williams, *Morehouse*  
 James Williams, *Morehouse*  
 Randy Williams, *Morehouse*  
 Jesse Winston, *Morehouse*  
 Jolee Woods, *Opelousas*  
 Anthony Woods, *Morehouse*  
 Mitchell Woods, *South Lake Charles*  
 Tracy Ann Young, *Southwest Louisiana*





## 2026 KIWANIS CONVENTION • JUNE 24-27 • MANILA, PHILIPPINES

Registration is now open for 2026 Kiwanis ICON!

Register **HERE** by February 2 to get the lowest rates!

(Registration closes on April 13) More ICON details **HERE**.



## Let's Support Linda Ramsey for International Trustee at ICON!

Happy New Year Kiwanis Friends! Best wishes for a wonderful year from the Ramsey family. I hope that 2026 has started off well, and I just wanted to remind you that registration for the Kiwanis International Convention in Manila is going on right now and will end in April and there will be no on-site registration. LaMissTenn Executive Director Jen has been great to provide us with tips for traveling to Manila, so I hope you will strongly consider attending. I need everyone who possibly can to attend and to be a part of my campaign team! Let's win this International Trustee race for LaMissTenn. Most of the meetings will be taking place in the Marriott Hotel and those rooms will start being released from the block in January. So please go ahead and book your room and make your plans now. It's going to be a great convention and a beautiful place so I hope to see you there!



## 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 6, 2026** with a submission deadline of **January 29, 2026**.

Check out more information **HERE**.

# GRANTS, GRANTS, & MORE GRANTS!

Visit [www.LaMissTenn.org](http://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  
**K-Kids**  
Young Leaders Helping Others

Kiwanis  
**ACTION CLUB**

KEY  
CLUB

Kiwanis  
**Builders Club**  
Building Leaders

CKI  
Circle K International

**Kiwanis**  
Service Leadership Programs





# 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. 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! **APPLY [HERE](#)**.



**Kiwaniis**  
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, 2025 on the website, [www.lamisstenn.org](http://www.lamisstenn.org).

Applications must be submitted online.

Applications due **by 11:59pm on Jan 31, 2026.**

### More Information



225-769-9233



[www.lamisstenn.org](http://www.lamisstenn.org)



# the POSSIBILITY PROJECT



## THE POSSIBILITY PROJECT - 2025 UPDATE

*By Lenny Simmons, Kiwanis Children's Fund District Chair*

As of December 1, 2025, The Kiwanis Children's Fund has collected in cash and pledges **\$9,550,000** of its **\$25,000,000** goal for the Possibility Project. In our District, Kiwanians have donated **\$258,083** in cash and pledges. It takes **\$2.25** to take care of the needs of one child. So far, our clubs have taken care of the needs of **114,703 children!** These funds will be used for grants to our Kiwanis Clubs locally and world-wide to provide needed services for our children. Here are a few examples of how our Kiwanis Clubs used these grant funds:

### **Orange City Public Library E-Bikes**

*Kiwanis Club of Floyd Valley, Iowa, U.S.* In its first year since chartering, the Kiwanis Club of Floyd Valley is already forming strong community partnerships to expand literacy. When the club heard that the local library was raising funds for a new e-bike program that will increase access to books and library programming in underserved areas, they decided to pitch in and purchase a safety and accessory package. A Kiwanis Children's Fund grant will go toward a helmet, umbrellas, a first aid kit, lights, a horn or bell, a tire pump and repair kit, a phone mount, a basket, safety vests,

and more supplies to make the library's e-bike safer. With the bike, library staff will be able to host remote story hours and even remotely check out materials to library patrons.

### **Pediatric Medical Equipment**

*Kiwanis Club of Tallahassee, Florida, U.S.* The Kiwanis Club of Tallahassee has a longstanding relationship with Bond Community Health Center, assisting in community outreach and providing chaperones for special events. Now members are teaming up with the Kiwanis Clubs of Southside Tallahassee, Tallahassee Northside, and Tallahassee-Killearn to provide new screening equipment for the clinic's pediatric patients, many of whom attend Title I schools or are on Medicaid. A Kiwanis Children's Fund microgrant will help purchase equipment for hearing screenings, benefiting thousands of children.

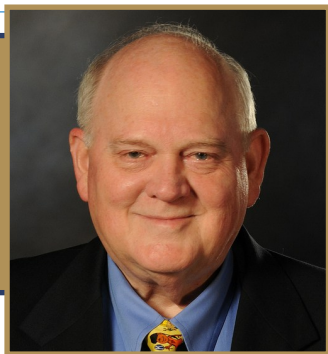
### **Building a Disc Golf Program**

*Kiwanis Club of Wheatland, Wyoming, U.S.* In the small, rural community of Chugwater, there are limited opportunities for kids and families to engage in outdoor activities. The Kiwanis Club of Wheatland is stepping in to fix that by purchasing a portable disc golf kit for the town's only

elementary school — with help from a Kiwanis Children's Fund microgrant and the Prairie View Charter School K-Kids. The 12 K-Kids club members have committed to raising US\$500 for the equipment, giving them the chance to develop as leaders in the community and be personally and financially invested in the disc golf course. The club is excited to help, and working with them is the Kiwanians' favorite part of the project. Once Kiwanis members have installed the equipment, they plan to provide initial instruction to students and teachers.

**Do not forget to make your annual club gift to the Kiwanis Children's Fund. If your club donates \$1,000 or more, your club would be eligible to get a George F. Hixon Fellowship award for its gift.**

**When sending contributions, 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, 46206. You can also pay on line by going to [Kiwanis.org](http://Kiwanis.org) and go to the Kiwanis Children's Fund tab. Consider the Possibilities! Consider the Children in our Communities and the World!**



## Aspire to Inspire: BIG PICTURE CONTEMPLATIONS

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

You have heard the old expression, "can't see the forest for the trees." What is meant is that vision and perspective are lost in the small details while someone just doesn't see the overall concepts, a.k.a. "big picture." Here we are at the beginning of 2026 probably revved with renewed energy and resolutions .... which are spurred by relative relaxation and perhaps some overindulgence during the holidays. It's time to resume our active and productive lives with all the promise of renewal.

Since you are reading this, you must be a Kiwanian and thus dedicated to our oft-repeated mantra about one child and one community at a time. You certainly remember your own personal "Kiwanis Moments" and there is a certain warm glow of satisfaction when recalling them. But what about those successes experienced by other Kiwanians?

Undoubtedly you know and enjoy the successes of your own club's projects to improve children's lives. But what about other Kiwanis clubs? If you read carefully this issue of our LaMissTenn Newsletter which is so professionally rendered by our own Tiffany LaPorte [Bravo and thank you Tiffany] ... you will see what other clubs are doing around LaMissTenn.

But what about the LaMissTenn

Kiwanis clubs that did not send information to Tiffany? Did they do nothing for children in their communities. Quoting John Wayne, "Not hardly." So, if you want to understand the BIG PICTURE OF KIWANIS, it is important to consider the quiet, unheralded but ongoing projects and efforts for children all around the district. You may not have personal knowledge of the benefits to each child and each community, but they are important facts.

But what about the other districts around the nation? What about the multitude of Kiwanis clubs in other countries around the world and what they are doing in their own communities? We are beginning to see through the trees and understand the forest.

Now if that adds a little perspective to the BIG PICTURE OF KIWANIS, let's push on a little further. Let's not overlook the significant impact for children by our SLPs..... Key Clubs, CKI Clubs, Builders Clubs, K-Kids Clubs, Aktion Clubs. The Kiwanis Family is huge, inclusive and important for improving the world.

Rolling along with this "Big Picture Contemplation" .... how about decades ago when we attacked Iodine Deficiency Disorder worldwide? How about The Eliminate Project? We immunized fifty million plus women of child-bearing age against tetanus in

some of the poorest parts of the world. Untold multiple millions of children have been born immune to neonatal tetanus and its gruesome death. We started that project in 2010 and now over fifteen years later can we "big picture speculate" that there must be at least one hundred million youngsters alive now that would have died without the efforts of our Kiwanis Family? Hey, that's a warm glow of satisfaction when you contemplate it.

What about the projects of our Kiwanis International Children's Foundation? What about the multiple foundations of the many Kiwanis districts? And individual club foundations? This brief article undoubtedly overlooks many more important impacts of Kiwanis. The accomplishments of Kiwanis are too huge to know all its nooks and crannies.

As we launch into 2026, it is of course the traditional time of renewal.... but let's also stand back, "look past the trees" and keep a wide view of the immense Kiwanis "forest." Enjoy the personal satisfactions from your hands-on activities and local accomplishments ... but also take pride in the BIG PICTURE CONTEMPLATIONS of what our Kiwanis Family accomplishes for the betterment of the world. Happy New Year to all ... and especially to all the children we serve.





## The Unstoppable Legacy: Past District Officers are the LaMissTenn Engine!

*By Ralph D. Carter, Past District Officer Organization Chair*

Did you know that the **Past District Officers (PDOs)** of the great and historic LaMissTenn District are one of our most valuable, untapped resources?

Sometimes, after the commitment of serving in a District leadership role, we might feel like we've "run our course" and can settle back into being an "ordinary" Kiwanian. But here is the truth: **as a Past District Officer, you never go back to ordinary!**

### **More Than Retired: PDOs are Mentors and Builders**

Imagine a scenario: A motivated but overwhelmed new club officer is searching for guidance—wondering what to focus on and how to inject fresh ideas into their club. Who better to step in than a PDO? As a **Mentor**,

PDOs possess a wealth of institutional knowledge and resources. We can expertly guide new leaders, sharing proven strategies and helping them navigate the complexities of club leadership. PDOs act as a **Blueprint** because we have seen what works and what doesn't across the entire District. Your experience is the blueprint for future success.

A PDO never truly retires their commitment; our involvement simply shifts from governing to **guiding**.

### **Reignite Your Kiwanis Impact: Join the PDO Organization!**

The PDO Organization is dedicated to leveraging this incredible pool of talent. By joining, you are not just paying dues—you are **investing in the future of LaMissTenn**.

We are calling on all Past District Officers to donate a modest **\$10 in annual dues** to continue this vital

work. Your support makes a direct impact by:

1. **Cultivating Fellowship:** Continuing to enjoy the camaraderie and intellectual exchange with like-minded, experienced Kiwanians.
2. **Shaping Future Leaders:** Actively helping to mentor and mold the next generation of District leaders.
3. **Building and Growing:** Providing a helping hand in chartering new clubs and driving membership growth across the District.
4. **Empowering Youth:** Funding scholarships for deserving youth to attend the impactful **Key Leader programs** within our District.

Your legacy is essential. Don't let your vast knowledge sit on the sidelines! **Renew your commitment and keep the LaMissTenn engine running strong!**

## New Curriculum for Key Leader

*By Linda Ramsey,  
Key Leader North Administrator*

A new curriculum has been rolled out for Kiwanis Key Leader this fall, 2025. It is still a work in progress as input is still being received by Kiwanis International. The schedule has been slightly changed in that it will start a little earlier and end a little earlier. This curriculum was supposed to be an update; however, it is a complete revision of the content.

We are having monthly Zoom meetings this year as Key Leader District

Committee Chairs, and this past month, I also invited our Site Chair, Jayne Parrish, to attend the meeting. We are learning more about the new curriculum during these sessions.

Registration for Key Leader will be open in January 2026. Our event is scheduled for April 24-26, 2026, at Lakeshore Camp and Retreat. We will begin looking for chaperones after the first of the year as well as student facilitators. Please remember that we try to encourage students to attend for the first time early in high school or even at the completion of 8th grade. That



will then allow them a chance to return as a student facilitator. Also, if you know of someone who might like to be a sponsor for a student, please contact me, and I can provide them with some additional information. Thank you!



## Key Leader South: A Life Changing Weekend

*By MiLisa York, Key Leader South Administrator*

It was an honor to have been chosen by our distinguished Governor, Marcel Lashover, to lead Key Leader South at Camp Istrouma this year!

For those who do not know what this program is about, Key Leader is a weekend leadership program for high school and graduating 8th Grade students. Our mission is to inspire young people to achieve their personal best through service leadership. The benefits offered through Key Leader are unique in that they focus on service leadership and social & emotional skills.

Key Leader not only empowers students to become more caring and confident leaders, but it teaches the importance of service and the impacts that service can have on them as individuals and their community.

I am proud to say we had thirty-nine young adults registered and thirty-seven attended! We had two staff members and eight chaperones who made this event

such a success! Hats off to our Lead Facilitator, Kim White, who was amazing and well received by the participants.

The Key Leader curriculum changed from prior sessions, but it still contained large & small group sessions, time for personal reflection, interactive activities, "challenge course" activities, and was also anchored by several videos. We also had a bonfire on Saturday and made smores! We ended the session with a graduation ceremony on Sunday where we gave each participant a certificate.

The feedback that I received not only from the participants, but from their parents was positive. I ran into one of the participants at her job with Raising Canes in Baton Rouge. She recognized me and told me what wonderful

experience Key Leader was and that she was looking forward to next year! I walked away with such pride in knowing that Key Leader made such an impact!

The LaMissTenn District Executive Team and I are already working on Key Leader South for 2026. But it takes more than us. It takes you as Kiwanis members and Clubs to help Key Leader South succeed. Whether it is volunteering your time to be either a staff member or chaperone, or you or your clubs sponsoring a student(s), we need your help. Let's work together to make Key Leader South 2026 the best event ever!





# Newly Formed St. Amant High Key Club Hits the Ground Running!

By Tiffany LaPorte, Ascension Kiwanis Club

The Kiwanis Clubs of Ascension and Baton Rouge have jointly sponsored a new Key Club at St. Amant High School in Ascension Parish. The Key Club was chartered on September 22, 2025 and the officers have already jumped into service!

St. Amant High School Key Club officers teamed up to prepare 80 sandwiches and 32 snack packs on Monday, November 24th for distribution to individuals facing food insecurity or homelessness. What a perfect way to help others during the Thanksgiving Holiday.

The faculty advisor for the newly formed Key Club is 2024-2025 St. Amant High School Teacher of the Year Kaylee Guidry. Kaylee serves as the campus JAG Specialist.

Under her leadership, students organize and run the school's *Helping Hands Closet* and participate in leadership competitions on the state and national level.

We can't wait to see the great things St. Amant High School Key Club will accomplish under Kaylee's guidance!



Pictured at top: St. Amant High School Key Club Officers: Madelyn Muse, Vice President; Paris McNabb, President; and Kendall Fournet, Secretary.



Pictured at left: St. Amant High School Key Club Faculty Advisor Kaylee Guidry with Key Club Officers Kendall Fournet and Madelyn Muse

Pictured below: St. Amant High School Key Club Officers assemble sandwiches and snack packs.





# District Aktion Club Updates

By Judy Couvillion, Aktion Club Administrator

Over the past several months Aktion Clubs in the LaMissTenn District continued to serve adults with disabilities through programs and activities that enhanced the lives of club members. All clubs reported successful programs that were of value to their members.

Headlining Aktion Club news for the fall is the chartering of a brand new club by the St. Bernard-Arabi Kiwanis Club. The new Aktion Club was chartered on Oct. 20 with 16 members. Amanda Hardesty is president of the sponsoring Kiwanis club and the club advisor will be Carol Salina. The group looks forward to enjoying programs and activities that are designed to enhance the lives of Aktion Club members

The Hammond Kiwanis Aktion Club continues its emphasis on educational programs at its regular meetings. Over the past several months Aktion Clubbers have been treated to variety of programs that were both interesting and informative. A recent highlight was Aktion Club members' participation in Ballin for Options, a basketball game starring adults with disabilities that serves as a fundraiser for Options, the local agency that serves adults with disabilities. The event is wildly popular and drew a standing-room-only crowd to watch

the spirited game.

The Aktion Club at the STARC West facility in Mandeville is on track to have an awesome year! With the help of the new director at STARC their Aktion Club has been active. The group holds monthly meetings that bring the members together for fellowship and fun. At a recent meeting the members colored pumpkin decorations and decorated cards for care packages heading to members in the military service. Members also delivered 1200 pounds of food and \$350 to a local food bank. Looking ahead, Aktion Club members are planning additional collections to help a local non-profits. Club members are regularly invited to attend meetings of the Northshore Mandeville Kiwanis Club.

The Germantown Aktion Club, with 22 members, meets at the Madonna Learning Center. The year started with the three Kiwanis advisors meeting with the teachers and staff for the adult program. The group laid out the plan for the year, meeting times and dates and projects for each month. Club officers were elected during the September meeting. At the October meeting 250 bologna and cheese sandwiches were made for St Mary's soup kitchen in Memphis. Also

discussed were fund raising projects and collecting shoes that [funds2orgs.com](http://funds2orgs.com) will purchase and resell to micro businesses. Members also made Boo-Grams for Halloween. At the November meeting they made Veterans Day Cards for family members who served in the Armed Forces and additional cards that were given to the local Forever Young organization to be distributed at their Veterans Day luncheon.



*The Madonna Learning Center Aktion Club worked hard to prepare and deliver Boo-Grams for Halloween.*



# Algiers Hosts Birthday Bingo Party

*By Linda Leger, Algiers Kiwanis Club*

On November 20 **Algiers Kiwanis** held a “Birthday & Bingo” party which will be a monthly project for the Woldenberg residents. The excited residents had a great time playing bingo, winning prizes, eating snacks, cake & ice cream while celebrating birthdays in November.



# Amory Kiwanis: Service from the Heart

*By Division 10A Lieutenant Governor Zandra Conner, Amory Kiwanis Club*

The **Kiwanis Club of Amory** is the proud sponsor of the Amory Middle School Builder’s Club (AMS). The AMS Builder’s Club has completed 3 of its goals for the year. First, the Builder’s Club collected food items and bought a turkey to make a Thanksgiving meal. The recipient was chosen by a teacher at the Amory Middle School. The gift was delivered by the Kiwanis Club of Amory Sponsor, Division 10A Lieutenant Governor Zandra Conner, and AMS Teacher sponsor, Carol Jones.

The Builder’s Club also collected quite a good many hygiene products to take to the fire department to help people that have had an accident involving fires. This year’s AMS Builder’s Club consists of many more kids that have the spirit of helping and serving! We are so very proud of them.

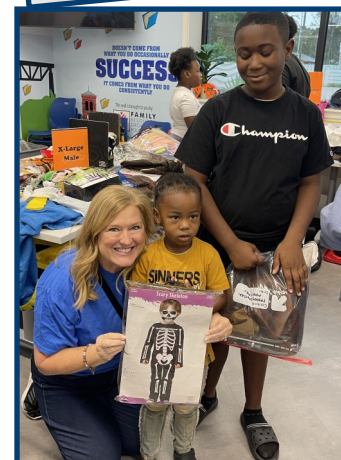




# Ascension Kiwanis Participates in Spooktacular Kiwanis One Day!

*By Donna Leggett, Ascension Kiwanis Club*

Ascension Kiwanis members volunteered at the 10/31 Consortium Costume Giveaway in Donaldsonville for their Kiwanis One Day project. Members enjoyed assisting hundreds of local boys and girls find the perfect costume for trick or treating! The happy children were given Halloween treats and balloons on their way out.





# Bluff City Kiwanis Hosts Inaugural Gratitude & Gravy Thanksgiving Event

By Angel Ivey, Bluff City Kiwanis Club



On November 22<sup>nd</sup>, the **Kiwanis Club of Bluff City** hosted their inaugural Thanksgiving community dinner at the Marion Hale Community Center in Memphis, TN. The club successfully fed over 80 guests in the community.

The Thanksgiving menu consisted of turkey, baked chicken, sausage links, seasoned rice, yams, green beans, corn, dinner rolls and gravy of course. Dessert was warm pumpkin pie. The food was donated by Ivey's Ice Cream, Monogram Foods and Colletta's Restaurant. Charter Member, Joseph Ivey, cooked food for 5 consecutive days to insure there was enough food for over 150 people.



The success of Gratitude & Gravy wasn't only in the food, but in community partnerships. The club partnered with local churches, who gave tickets to give to families in need. In addition, tickets were donated to foster families who look for additional resources to support their extended families.

To usher in the holiday season, charter member Chenise Anthony, raffled off three Christmas trees, including a Kiwanis themed Christmas tree donated by Wonderland Christmas Company.

Gratitude & Gravy was a success for this new club. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Gratitude & Gravy will take place on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026, and everyone is invited to Thanksgiving Dinner!





## Cortana Kiwanis Cares

By Wanda Magee, Cortana Kiwanis Club

### CHRISTMAS CHEER

On December 10th, Cortana Kiwanis members Heather Folks-Givens and Pam Morgan took the opportunity to help "Little Buddies" of the Big Buddy program choose gifts for their family members.



On December 11th, Cortana members Susie Hahn, Wanda Magee, Keith & Tammy McDavid and approximately 15 Helix Mentorship STEAM Academy Key Club members and advisor Sgt. Jerrod Webb helped give a child a reason to smile this Christmas season during the 2025 St. Vincent de Paul/Sylvia's Toys for Christmas drive.

They served as Santa's Magic Making Elves helping parents choose Christmas gifts for their children and wrapping the selected gifts.



### FOUNDATION GRANTS

Danny Fields presented Cortana Kiwanis Foundation grant checks for \$2,400 to the Istrouma Area Council of the Boy Scouts, and the Safety Place. Also, a grant of \$1,000 enabled four representatives, Jasai Allen, Ja'Dyra Bell, Jaelyn Fields, and Dylan Clay from Helix Mentorship STEAM Academy Key Club to attend Key Leader Weekend.



### THANKSGIVING MEALS

On November 25, 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.



### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

As a result of the Cortana Giving Challenge for the Food Bank, a check for \$2,375 was presented.

On November 15th, Cortana Kiwanis members provided jambalaya for Safety Place's 'With Love, Community Baby Shower.' This event celebrates expecting families in the community by providing them with support, educational resources, and essential items.

On November 1st, Cortana Kiwanis members cooked and served jambalaya for 125 meals at the Bridgeview Gun Club in Port Allen, LA.



### BROADMOOR ELEMENTARY

Chuck and Pam Morgan delivered toys, games and school supplies donated by Cortana Kiwanis for the Buc Store to Broadmoor Elementary.

On October 15th, Cortana members visited the 3rd-5th grade students to get them excited about Bringing Up their Grades!





# Dyersburg Kiwanis: Goodfellows Project

By Sandy Tarkington, Dyersburg Kiwanis Club

The Kiwanis Club of Dyersburg collected financial donations from individuals, businesses, churches, organizations, and the club's own members for their 80<sup>th</sup> annual Goodfellows program. This year, the club provided 450 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 2024.

On December 17<sup>th</sup>, Kiwanis Club of Dyersburg and community volunteers met at the Dyer County Fairgrounds to construct and pack food boxes. Volunteers included Kiwanis members, their family members, friends, and students from area schools. The next morning at 5am, Dyersburg Street Department, Newbern Public Works Department, and Dyer County Highway Department began delivering all boxes to homes across the city and county.

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 coordinated food orders, Burks Beverage provided cartage, and schools provided a trailer to dispose of packaging.

Goodfellows project coordinator Vanedda Webb said, "Through the Goodfellows project, our local Kiwanis

Club makes a meaningful impact on the daily lives of families each Christmas. It's amazing to see how our club members and their families, in partnership with our community, come together to make this happen. Our local street and road crews who help deliver the food boxes tell us that delivery day is their favorite working day of the year because of the joy the boxes bring to the recipients."

Kiwanis Club of Dyersburg – dedicated to improving our community, 450 households at a time.

## Zachary Kiwanis: Wreaths Across America

By Division 8W Lieutenant Governor MiLisa York, Zachary Kiwanis Club

Several members of the Zachary Kiwanis Club along with other volunteers for Wreaths Across America laid Christmas wreaths on the graves of veterans at the Louisiana National Cemetery.

President MiLisa York, with the support of fellow members Ben Necaise, Al Phillips, Bruce Langley, Mike Alu, and Mark Antoine,

laid a Christmas wreath on her husband's (Dennis) grave who recently passed away.





## Greenville Kiwanis Spreads Christmas Cheer

By Angela Crooms, Greenville Kiwanis Club



### ANGEL TREE JOY

The Kiwanis Club of Greenville proudly partnered with the Warren-Washington-Issaquena-Sharkey Community Action Agency (WWISCAA) to help ensure every child wakes up to a gift on Christmas morning. Families participating in the Angel Tree Program visited WWISCAA to share the names, ages, gender, and interests of their little ones. Our incredible Service Committee Chair, Britt Virden, picked up 20 angels on behalf of our club, and on December 16th, we delivered a sleigh full of gifts back to WWISCAA for deserving families to enjoy. Nothing warms the heart like knowing we've helped brighten a child's Christmas!

### CHRISTMAS BELLS OF HOPE

And on December 6th, our club spent the day spreading Christmas cheer at the Greenville Walmart, 1831 Highway 1 South, as we rang the bell for the Salvation Army. The sound of the bell is more than just a holiday tradition, it is the sound of meals being provided, joy being restored, and families finding hope. Volunteering gave our members a chance to spread love, serve our neighbors, and feel the true magic of the season.





# Hammond Rolls Out Operation Christmas

*By Judy & Vic Couvillion, Hammond Kiwanis Club*



A large number of Hammond Kiwanians, along with a few volunteers, made quick work of filling 120 shoeboxes with a 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 delivers gifts to children in more than 100 countries each year.

Judy Couvillion, who chairs the Operation Christmas Child project for the **Hammond Kiwanis Club**, said of the endeavor, “this has turned out to be one of the most rewarding and even fun projects with which our club has become involved. We refer to our great organization as Kiwanis International and the opportunities to become involved in a program that involves helping children literally around the world are frequently hard to find. Through the Operation Christmas Child, Kiwanis members in the United States can discover a relatively easy way to reach out to children in far away nations and give them gifts that they would not otherwise receive.”

Included in the shoeboxes filled by the Hammond Kiwanians were such things as items of clothing, deflated beach balls, flip-flops, small toys, pens, pencils and note pads, tooth brushes,

harmonicas and kazoos, and other small items. For a Louisiana flair, small bags of Mardi Gras beads were included in each box. The quest to properly fill the shoeboxes to overflowing is a year-long endeavor. The items that will go into the boxes are accumulated gradually and are ready for the big “packing day.”

Distribution of the shoeboxes has already started. In a recent message from Samaritan’s Purse, shoeboxes were being delivered to children in an area of Jamaica that was devastated by a recent hurricane. “Knowing that you are doing something good for children that you will never see or get to know is still rewarding. We are blessed with so much in the United States and it is rewarding to share with children in needy countries who do not have the resources we enjoy here at home. This is a most rewarding project,” Couvillion said.

Operation Christmas Child Samaritan’s Purse is a mission of the Billy Graham Ministries. Churches, civic organizations and individuals collectively prepare and ship tens of thousands of the shoeboxes every year bringing smiles to the faces of children who something special at that special time of the year, Christmas.

Rev. Jeff Robinson, pastor at the First Baptist Church of Hammond, led Hammond Kiwanians in a prayer before the “packing” started related that he had been on a mission when shoeboxes were delivered and that the children were overwhelmed with joy because they had, “gotten a box!” His message made the packing party an even more joyous and meaningful occasion.





## Laurel Kiwanis Pancake Day

*By Billy Taylor, Laurel Kiwanis Club*

The Laurel Kiwanis Club recently held their 71st annual Pancake Day at two locations in downtown Laurel. Our two locations are the YWCO and First Baptist Church Laurel.

Pancake Day in Laurel is held on the same day as the Laurel Sertoma Club annual Christmas parade. The two events compliment each other and draw thousands of people to downtown Laurel.

Our Kiwanis Governor, Marcel Lashover, brought his cooking skills to Laurel to help out again. Marcel has worked our Laurel Kiwanis Pancake Day multiple times.

Our five sponsored Key Clubs also provide workers for our Pancake Day. Having two locations allowed our club to serve 3,329 total people at this year's Pancake Day.

Results are still being tallied for this year's Pancake Day, but last year our club netted \$34,167 from the 2024 Pancake Day. The funds are used to fund our two main projects which are providing math flash cards for every 3rd grade student in our county each school year. The remaining is used to fund approximately fifteen \$500 college scholarships for graduating high school seniors each year.



## Memphis Kiwanis Ramp-Build

*By Melanie Blakeney, Memphis Kiwanis Club*

On a crisp morning, members of the **Kiwanis Club of Memphis** came together to offer a heartfelt helping hand to a child in need. The team planned and constructed a wheelchair ramp, ensuring safe and easy access to the home.

Club members organize at least two ramp-building projects each year, and the grateful smiles they receive make every effort especially rewarding. Memphis is dedicated to improving the world one child and one community at a time!



## New Orleans Kiwanis Forges the Future with S.T.E.A.M.

*By Cathy Simmons, New Orleans Kiwanis Club*

**Kiwanis Club of New Orleans** believes that the youth of today are the leaders of the future, and proudly sponsors the Key Club at Ben Franklin High School. Earlier this year, our club learned of the school's efforts to build a state of the art "STEAM Lab" on their campus. Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics is the amazing approach to education that emphasizes interdisciplinary learning. It integrates these five fields into a cohesive curriculum that encourages students to apply knowledge in real-world contexts.

Part of the STEAM program is the fabrication lab, or "Fab Lab". Wherein students will have a hands-on, creative space equipped with tools that allow them to design, prototype, and build real-world projects, applying science, technology, engineering, and math concepts in practical ways. In science and engineering classes, students will use the Fab Lab to conduct experiments, solve design challenges, and create models or devices—helping them develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and technical skills through



*New Orleans Kiwanis Club members attend the grand opening of the STEAM Center at Ben Franklin High School*

project-based learning. The Kiwanis Club of New Orleans sponsored the Fab Lab with a donation of \$100,000. This gift is our commitment to strengthen hands-on learning, expand innovation, and create opportunities for students to advance in science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics.

Schools around the city will be able to use the STEAM Center on weekends, as part of their curriculum.

*New Orleans Kiwanis Club President Debi Ryan and Ben Franklin High School Key Club Advisor John Parauka*



## Opelousas Kiwanis: Christmas Cares

*By Carrie Richard, Opelousas Kiwanis Club*

**The Kiwanis Club of Opelousas** completed its 2nd Annual Christmas Cares Project. Thanks to the St. Landry Parish School Board, we learned that

31 students in our parish are currently without stable housing.

Each student completed a Christmas Wish List with their personal needs and wants for the holiday. After receiving all 31 lists in November, each Kiwanian "adopted" a student and shopped spe-

cifically for that child's wishes.

In addition to the gifts purchased from the lists, the Kiwanis Club of Opelousas provided each student with a \$100 Visa gift card, ensuring they could select something special for themselves.





# Opelousas Kiwanis: Doing Great Things!

By Carrie Richard, Opelousas Kiwanis Club

## TRUNK OR TREATS

The Opelousas Kiwanis Club recently participated in the 6th Annual City-Wide Trunk or Treat, held on October 25th. More than 1,200 children attended the event, which featured local businesses and organizations setting up festive tents and displays inside the school gymnasium.

In addition, on October 25th, the Opelousas Kiwanis Club also participated in the 2nd Annual Park Vista Elementary Trunk or Treat, held at one of the club's sponsored schools.



Last but not least, Park Vista Elementary participated in a coloring contest from Pre-K – 4th Grade. We had over 500 entries and we picked best 4 winners.

## BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

The 22nd Annual *Breakfast with Santa*, benefiting the Opelousas Cerebral Palsy Clinic, was held on December 2nd at the Steamboat Warehouse in Washington, LA. The cherished event was hosted by owner Jason Huguet, who welcomed families for a morning of holiday cheer, community spirit, and support for children in need.

This beloved tradition began 22 years ago when local businessman Bobby Dupre first dressed as Santa Claus to



spread Christmas joy to children with cerebral palsy. Following Mr. Dupre's passing on December 8, 2022, his daughter, Kelly Dupre, has faithfully carried on his heartfelt mission to brighten the season for local families.

Volunteers from the Opelousas Kiwanis Club, St. Landry Chamber Youth Leadership Council, Rotary Club, and St. Landry Interact Club generously served breakfast to patrons throughout the event. Their dedication helped ensure a welcoming and festive experience for all attendees.

Funds raised from the breakfast support approximately 50 children, providing 30 minutes of therapy tailored to each child's individual needs.

In further support of this mission, the Opelousas Kiwanis Club presented the clinic with a \$500 donation to continue offering free physical and occupational therapy to children who need it most.

The event once again highlighted the power of community partnership and compassion—continuing the legacy of Bobby Dupre and bringing holiday hope to families across the region.

## LIGHTING OF NATIVITY

The holiday season officially began in Opelousas with the beloved annual Lighting of the Nativity, held on

November 29th, at the St. Landry Parish Courthouse. From 3-6pm, the Courthouse Square was transformed into a festive gathering place filled with holiday cheer and family-friendly activities.

Children enjoyed free photos with Santa, free train rides, free popcorn, and a friendship bracelet-making station. Adults browsed a vibrant vendor market along Court Street, featuring local art, specialty items, and delicious foods from area creators and small businesses. The Grinch even made a special appearance, posing for photos and surprising guests throughout the evening.

For the fifth year in a row, the Opelousas Kiwanis Club warmed up the community with bowls of free taco soup, lovingly prepared by President Pam Vidrine. Guests also enjoyed free hot cocoa served by the Opelousas Women's Club, adding to the cozy holiday atmosphere.

The Lighting of the Nativity continues to be a cherished tradition in St. Landry Parish, bringing families together to celebrate the spirit of the season and support local organizations and artists.





# Orange Grove Kiwanis Recognized as Harrison County School District Partner

By Rhett Hamiter, Orange Grove Kiwanis Club

The Harrison County School District recognized the **Orange Grove Kiwanis Club** and several other organizations as community partners on Monday, December 8th, for their ongoing support of students, including 713 known homeless students in the district.



*Orange Grove Kiwanis Club President Rhett Hamiter receives an appreciation plaque from Harrison County School District Superintendent William Bentz for the club's partnership and ongoing support of students.*



## Pontchartrain Gives Back

By Myra Lewis, Pontchartrain Kiwanis

### TOY DRIVE

The culmination of Children's Hospital's 34th Annual Toy Drive took place on December 11. Thousands of toys collected from businesses and organizations around the greater New Orleans area were trucked into the Knights of Columbus in Gretna.

Pontchartrain Kiwanis members collected toys from campuses of the New Orleans People Program and Holy Spirit Catholic Church. Joined by fellow Members joined with fellow Kiwanians from Moisant and a host of volunteers from the hospital, local schools and various organizations to sort, categorize and box the toys. What appeared to be

chaos was actually a systematic approach to get many hands involved in making short work of a monumental task.

At the end of the day, trucks were packed with hundreds of labeled boxes that were transported for storage at the hospital. The toys collected each year help to make the children's hospital experience more tolerable. Enough toys are collected to last the entire year.

### FOOD BANK

The **Kiwanis Club of Pontchartrain** presented a \$250 check to the St. Peter Claver Food Pantry to help alleviate food insecurity during this Thanksgiving season. Pictured with food pantry volunteers including Deacon Allen Stevens are Kiwanis Club of Pontchartrain members Deidre Charlot and Myra Lewis.





## Ponchatoula Kiwanis: Brings Happy Holidays

*By Pete Clark, Ponchatoula Kiwanis Club*

### THANKSGIVING LUNCHEON

The Kiwanis Club of Ponchatoula and the Ponchatoula Rotary Club recently held 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 help 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 is served and eaten the second part is 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 at giving back to our community in any way possible.

### CHRISTMAS PARTY

The Ponchatoula Kiwanis Club hosted a Christmas Party for an extended foster care program. We cannot express the joy of hosting this event as the kids in the program come together once again. Our club helped decorate, serve food, and helped pass out gifts. We had fun with the young adults by meeting and interacting and watched as they enjoyed the fun games. Some of their family members came to enjoy this time with them.



Our club was also able to donate certain gifts and partner with other local business owners for donations as well. There was a photographer taking their pictures at the photo drop throughout the party. To see the happiness and smiles on the young adults' faces makes us all happy and enforces the reason for what we do!!





## St. Bernard-Arabi Rolls the Dice for Literacy

By Carol Saling, St. Bernard-Arabi Kiwanis Club

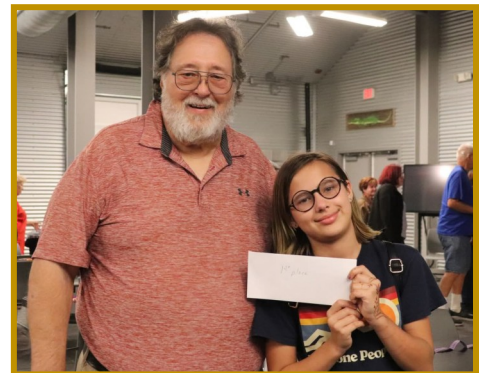


Dice were rolling in November as the **Kiwanis Club of St Bernard-Arabi** Club hosted a Bunco Fundraiser at Meraux Foundation's Docville Farm. Club members and community partners ante-up to play this fast-paced dice game for literacy. Prizes were awarded for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place, along with most buncos. Two Bunco newbies, the club photographer and the president's daughter, took home the 1<sup>st</sup> place prize in an exciting roll off.

Club members donated food for everyone to enjoy along with an array of items for the Parade of Prizes. Our Prize Guru, Karen did a fabulous job arranging all the wonderful items which brought in big bucks.

Newbies and seasoned Bunco veterans had a great time all while raising funds to support the club's Literacy Initiatives like Dolly Parton Imagination Library, RAW, Reading Incentive Program among others.

The dice will keep rolling in 2026 with several more fun Bunco nights in the plans.





## Tri Parishes Kiwanis: Fall & Winter Highlights

By Val Johnson, Tri Parishes Kiwanis Club

### REEL MEMORIES: FISHING

Ya know what they say about it taking a village! **Kiwanis Club of Tri Parishes** joined Impact 365 as they gave the experience of fishing to our young people!

### SCIENCE FAIR

We were inspired at the West St. John High School Science Fair, where over 65 student projects showcased creativity and innovation across science and engineering disciplines. Representing Kiwanis, Ms. Gwen Lee proudly served as a judge.



### FINANCIAL LITERACY

We planted seeds for future success for students at Garyville Magnet Elementary by teaching financial literacy and helping them open savings accounts.



### TOYS FOR TOTS

Children of all ages selected Christmas toys and shared special moments with Santa. The excitement from the kids is the true spirit of the season!



### TOGETHER WE SHINE: A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

We had a blast celebrating Christmas with the family of St James ARC. Pictures with Santa were a success! Over 200 kids lined up for pictures, toys, coats, and blankets to make this a memorable Christmas!





# Tupelo Kiwanis: Keeping Busy!

By Melonie Kight, Tupelo Kiwanis Club



## CHRISTMAS PARADE

This year, the **Kiwanis Club of Tupelo** partnered with Tupelo High School's Key Club and walked in the Annual Tupelo Christmas Parade! It was very cold, but we had a ball!

Special thanks to Tupelo Kiwanian Lori Dillon, our Key Club liaison, who worked hard to coordinate all of us!



## YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

The Tupelo Kiwanis Club hosted the Community Development Foundation's monthly Tupelo Young Professionals Christmas Party. The Tupelo Young Professionals group is Tupelo and Lee County's premier networking organization for young, up and coming professionals ages 21-40 formed to create a more vibrant and connected community.

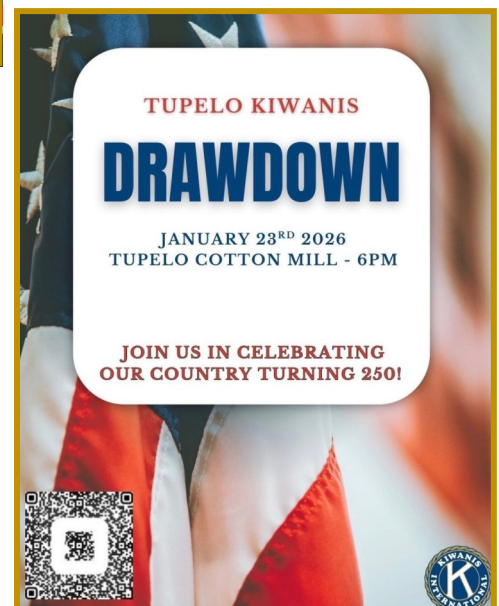
We wore our ugly Christmas sweaters! Hopefully some of the young professionals will join the Tupelo Kiwanis Club!

## KIWANIS DRAWDOWN

Kiwanis Club of Tupelo is promoting their annual Kiwanis Drawdown scheduled for Friday, Jan. 23, 2026 at the Tupelo Cotton Mill. Since 2026 will be our country's 250th Anniversary, this year's Drawdown theme will be

Patriotic - Red, White & Blue. Tickets are \$165 which is good for two adults, food, drinks and TWO, yes, TWO chances to win \$10,000! There will also be a silent and live auction!

For more information or to purchase tickets, call Melonie Kight 662-322-7531.





# Zachary Kiwanis Serves Community

*By Division 8W Lieutenant Governor MiLisa York, Zachary Kiwanis Club*

## CATFISH FRY & BLOOD DRIVE

On October 10th, the **Zachary Kiwanis Club** held their annual catfish fry fundraiser as well as a blood drive in honor of Captain Brett Stassi, Jr. of the Iberville Parish Sheriff's Office. Special shout out to the Mayor of Zachary, David McDavid; Zachary Police Chief, Darryl Lawrence; and Zachary Fire Chief, Danny Kimball. What a village! →



## TRUNK N TREAT

On October 18th, President and Division 8W Lieutenant Governor, MiLisa York along with member, Mike Alu, and several of MiLisa's grandchildren, participated in the Trunk N Treat at the Zachary United Methodist Church. ↓



went to the Louisiana Veterans Home in Jackson, Louisiana to celebrate the birthdays of two veterans, Donald J. Wildon, Army; and John L. Wilson, National Guard. →

## THANKSGIVING MEALS

On November 26th, The Zachary Kiwanis Club was able to bless seven families with Thanksgiving baskets this year! They love to serve the children of Zachary! ↓



## VETERAN BIRTHDAYS

On November 22nd, Zachary Kiwanis Club Secretary, Debbi Mashaw, along with President and Division 8W Lieutenant Governor, MiLisa York & her two grandchildren, and Christopher & Chrisley Williams,





# Share Your Club's News!

By Tiffany LaPorte, District Bulletin Editor

## Submit your article and photographs:

EMAIL: [tiffany@lamisstenn.org](mailto: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:

***April 2026 Issue = Deadline March 15, 2026***

### 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  
Louisiana-Mississippi-West Tennessee District of  
Kiwanis International

### **2025-2026 LAMISSTENN DISTRICT BOARD:**

**Governor:** Marcel Lashover

**Governor-Elect:** Andrew Dozier

**Vice Governor:** Laura Gilliland

**Immediate Past Governor:** Claude Vinson

**Executive Director:** Jen Robertson

**Region I Trustee:**

Oscar Brown, *Millington, TN*

**Region II Trustee:**

Ralph Carter, III, *Columbus, MS*

**Region III Trustee:**

Lorri Alles, *The Natchez Trace, MS*

**Region IV Trustee:**

Jennifer Kelly-White, *Thibodaux, LA*

**Region V Trustee:**

Rick Danielson, *Northshore Mandeville, LA*

**Region VI Trustee:**

John Gherardi, *Lafayette, LA*

**Region VII Trustee:**

Darren Green, *Alexandria, LA*

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### **HOURS:**

Monday - Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.