



NEWS

April 2026



Ascension and Central Kiwanis Fight Hunger Together

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



ON THE COVER: FIGHTING HUNGER TOGETHER

Ascension Kiwanis member (center) Donna Leggett and **Central Kiwanis** members Chelsey Roy & Scott Parker help pack boxes of food at the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank. The clubs partner quarterly to help feed families. *See more on page 28.*

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A Message from the Governor

By Marcel Lashover, Governor

Hello to all LaMissTenn Kiwanis Members,

We have just had a successful 2026 Mid-Year Educational Conference in Natchitoches, LA, with a great turnout, thanks to everyone who showed up to learn how to help their kids in their community.

I hope your club is sending Key Clubbers to the Key Club Convention on the weekend of April 10th in Natchez. All information is on the LaMissTenn.org website under Key Club.

Several of us are going to Manila for ICON from June 24 to 27th to support Linda Ramsey, who is running for International Trustee.

Well, our DCON 2026 will be held in Kenner, LA, and it will be a fun event.



Again, your district leadership, Gov. Elect Andrew, Vice Governor Laura, your Lt Gov., and I have been busy in the last 3 months opening and installing clubs. If you haven't seen or heard from the team yet, then please reach out to your Lt. Governor or one of us today.

This year, we have opened 2 new clubs and have 2 more to complete our goal of 4 new clubs.

The 2nd club opened mid January in Cleveland, MS, with the Greenville, MS, club sponsoring. 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 (jen@lamisstenn.org) to learn what you need to do to make it happen. Thanks for stepping up.

Past Governor John Fry, your District Membership Chair, has been busy working with our past governors and the PDO group 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 1st to do your part by joining me, Andrew, Laura, your Trustees, and LT 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. You can contact me by email or phone: lamisstenngov2526@gmail.com 504-272-1600.

Thanks, hope you all are doing well, and see you soon,

Marcel Lashover
2025-2026 Governor



Gov. Marcel recruits Bastrop City Marshall Lisa Chafford to the new Morehouse Kiwanis Club.



Gov. Marcel and Vice Gov. Laura recruit Jennifer Adams-Williams, Adams Law Office, LLC (bottom left) & Missy Powell, Tiny Tots Child Development Center (above) to the new Mid Mississippi Delta Kiwanis Club.



Find the ACE Tool

By Andrew Dozier, Governor-Elect

Achieving Club Excellence (ACE) is the road to learning proven strategies that will help clubs, from improving club operations and fundraising to service and community impact.

Assess the situation, diagnose the need, and take into consideration the club members' and leader's concerns and goals. Take the time to listen and consider what the club can do to improve.

Addressing clubs' concerns and use the right tool that can help you get a sense of what's going on. That will bring progress and better results. www.Kiwanis.org/ACEtools.



Clubs benefit by:

- Assessing club projects,
- Engaging club members in club improvements,
- Enhancing the membership experience,
- Increasing the active membership base, and
- Augmenting service impact in the community and creating public awareness of the Kiwanis mission.

The first step towards excellence is to renew the members' commitment to the Kiwanis purpose, to each other, and the club.

Change is critical for each club. Understanding the current operation, identifying areas that may be improved, and taking measured steps are crucial to accomplishing our goal.

Successful clubs have goals and a plan to achieve them. Achievement comes from focusing on the vision and aligning it with the club's yearly goals.

When planning for success, let's use the SMART goals:

- **S**-pecific,
- **M**-easurable,
- **A**-ction,
- **R**-ealistic,
- **T**-ime

Once goals are established, find out the progress and achievements, and celebrate and recognize our members for work and dedication to the cause.

As we approach the 3rd quarter, I'm confident we can meet our goals by delivering value to our Kiwanis clubs. When our service is conducted, fun is planned, and marketing is used, our communities know what Kiwanis is and does. Membership is a consistent when Kiwanis family responsibilities of sponsoring service leadership programs are met.

As I travel across this district, I'm so excited and fired up, seeing the hard work and dedication of our members meeting the challenges and excelling.

Continue to seek new ideas, fresh approaches and shared interests in the community to keep us energized and motivated, thank you!!!!

I Salute You!

Andrew Dozier

2025-2026 Governor-Elect



Governor-Elect Andrew Dozier (center) visits the Hammond Kiwanis Club. With him are Hammond Kiwanis President Byron Bankston (left) and Hammond Kiwanis President-Elect Roy Blackwood (right).



... That's What It's All About!

By Claude Vinson, Immediate Past Governor

Ok, it's pretty-well vetted, researched, documented and basically known by all that I love to spread the joy of doing the Hokey Pokey. Whether it be at clubs, conferences, or conventions, it's a simple, but playful song and dance, which origins can be traced to the mid-20th century by American performers Larry LaPrise, Charles Macak, and Taft Baker as an instrumental. I suppose, the 1940s Trio equivalent to the 3 Stooges, Dewey, Cheatum, and Howe.

Now, the precise source of the dance remains a subject of scholarly discussion, in part due to its straightforward, repetitive movements and memorable lyrics that foster group participation. But if you've witnessed how funny we participants perform the dance, you would call to question our mental stability or which bar we recently visited.

Why do I do it you might ask? I don't think even the brains in academia have been able to figure it out, but I'm sure it's up there in the mystery-sphere along with Loch Ness, Bigfoot, and Teletubbies.

To me, the way Hokey Pokey makes people feel; the surprise looks on faces, most likely recalling a time in their lives when having experienced the song, reminds all of us that Kiwanis is indeed about FUN-raising!

Years ago, when it was my turn to

lead my club's opening song, I proceeded to the front of the room and started doing the hokey pokey to the bewilderment and amazement of the members. When I finished, you could hear a pin drop. I'm sure the membership wondered which bar I could've visited that morning. The laughter ensued in delight!

After that, I made it my mission to spread the fun-raising cheer of doing the Hokey Pokey everywhere, including Key Club Convention, local, clubs, Mid-Year and yes, District Convention.

Because... "That's what it's all about!", Isn't it?

It's about uplifting and being supportive of each other; to not mock, ridicule or discourage. For we are one big Kiwanis family with a shared mission and should always strive and adhere to the six objects of Kiwanis. Because that's what it's all about!

Use the Hokey Pokey in your membership drives as a short interactive icebreaker at meetings, community booths, or open house. The objective is to lower the "unfamiliar walking into a club meeting"-barrier, to create instant belonging, and then connect that positive moment to maybe completing a membership application. This approach not only makes newcomers feel at ease but also helps them envision themselves as part of a supportive and enthusiastic group dedicated to making a difference. Because that's what it's all about!

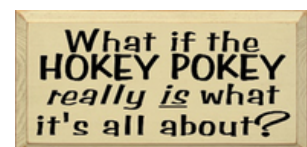
Get kids in the Service Leadership Programs engaged in the Hokey

Pokey! Encourage our kids to let them know it's all about having fun —no one needs to be perfect! Let them lead a verse or suggest a new move, which helps everyone feel involved and valued. Because that's what it's all about!

Governor Marcel's motto is to A.S.K. to G.E.T. So, what's next? We need to engage in all the tools available to K-E-E-P and retain members. Reach out to those former members, understand why they left Kiwanis and ask them to rejoin. Immediately connect with prospective members; remember, they contacted to inquire about Kiwanis. Mentor new members by employing Kiwanis Companions and occasionally ask current members how they are doing. Because that's what it's all about!

Be bold, be daring; not afraid to try something new, spontaneous and fun. Continue to search for that "sweet spot" which equates to Interest + Spontaneity + Play + Nimbleness + Mobility + Inclusion and let's help Gov. Marcel and his team get LaMissTenn back up to 5,000 members strong. Because that's what it's all about!

"So put your best thoughts in and take the rustiness out and put your best self in and just shake it all about, then do the Hokey Pokey and help the district grow by LEAPS and BOUNDS, 'cause that's what it's all about!" (Hey, even Bella can do the hokey pokey)



2024-2025 Distinguished Awards & Contests

Distinguished Clubs

- 1A Twin Cities, TN
- 1C Germantown, TN
- 1C Millington, TN
- 4A New Orleans, LA
- 4A Pontchartrain, LA
- 4A St. Bernard-Arabi, LA
- 4B Dawn Busters, LA
- 7 Opelousas, LA
- 8E Ascension, LA
- 8W Baton Rouge, LA
- 13 Ponchatoula, LA
- 15 Vicksburg, LA

Distinguished LG

- 12 North Lake Charles, LA
Amanda Johnson

Distinguished Kiwanians

- 1A Twin Cities, TN
LaWanda Alfred
Cathy Fry
John Fry
Kimberly Jackson
Mark Jackson
- 4B Dawn Busters, LA
Jacqueline Appleton
Jacqueline Dardano
Melvin Dussel
Mike Haffner
BJ Kruse
Marcel Lashover
Katie Long
- 7 Lafayette, LA
John Gherardi
Tom Long

Distinguished Secretaries

- 2 Greenville, MS
Angela Crooms
- 4A Algiers, LA
Linda Leger
- 4A St. Bernard-Arabi, LA
Carol Saling
- 7 Opelousas, LA
Carrie Richard
- 8W Baton Rouge, LA
Gary Graham
- 11 Alexandria, LA
Darren Green
- 13 Ponchatoula, LA
Shelley Zahn
- 15 Vicksburg, MS
Tom Osburn

Gold Star Clubs

- 2 Greenville, MS
- 4A Big Easy, LA
- 4A Pontchartrain, LA
- 4B Thibodaux, LA
- 5 Rankin County
- 6 Greater Ouachita, LA
- 7 Opelousas, LA
- 8E Walker, LA
- 9 Shreveport, LA
- 11 Pineville, LA
- 12 DeRidder, LA
- 12 Southwest Louisiana
- 14 Long Beach, MS

Make the District Pay

- 2 Greenville, MS
- 7 Opelousas, LA

Inter-Club

- 8E Cortana, LA

Mid-Year Distinguished Awards & Contests



2024-2025 Distinguished Clubs



2024-2025 Distinguished Secretaries



2024-2025 Distinguished Kiwanians



2026 Group 1 Signature Project submissions - The Kiwanis Club of Opelousas' Signature Project, Kiwanis Kids, was chosen as the District Selection for the Kiwanis International Contest.



2026 Group 2 Signature Project submissions - The Kiwanis Club of East St. Mary's Signature Project, Annual Trivia Night, was chosen as the District Selection for the Kiwanis International Contest.

Mid-Year Distinguished Awards & Contests



Exec. Dir. Jen Robertson presents the Inter-Club award to Heather Givens for Cortana Kiwanis.



Exec. Dir. Jen Robertson presents the Distinguished Lt. Governor award to Amanda Johnson, Div. 12.



Exec. Dir. Jen Robertson presents checks to the winners of the Division and Club Mid-Year Attendance Challenges. Division 2 (Tracy Cameron) and Biloxi Kiwanis (Brian Lake) were the winners!

2024-2025 Jay R. Broussard Memorial Outstanding Club Secretary Awarded to Linda Leger, Kiwanis Club of Algiers



The District is proud to announce Linda Leger as the recipient of the 2024-2025 Jay R. Broussard Memorial Outstanding Secretary Award.

Linda has been a member of the **Algiers Kiwanis Club** in various positions for many years. She is a model example of a true servant leader. Her dedication to all people and projects with a great smile is seen by all.

Linda picked up the pieces when the club suddenly lost its previous secretary. She ensured that the club was current on all monthly information and reports. She has taken the time to go thru training and zoom meetings to give members the most accurate information needed. Linda sends out weekly newsletters to keep all members informed. She also sends reminder memos about meetings, special items needed, Key Club information and inter-clubs.

On top of this Linda comes to all meetings, tailgate parties, Bingo's, holiday parties for the nursing home and visits the elderly that she has gotten to know thru Kiwanis who have had to move on to other nursing homes. Thank you Linda, for your dedication to Kiwanis!

Mid-Year Education Conference Recap

One hundred eighty KIWANIS from over 50 clubs in the LaMissTenn District attended the 2026 Mid-Year Education Conference in Natchitoches, LA on Saturday, March 21st. The energy level was high while participants enjoyed programs on membership growth and club networking.



Past International President Nettles Brown and Region 4 Trustee Jennifer Kelly-White are ready to roll!



Bluff City Kiwanis Club President Angelique Ivey shares her thoughts.



Sarah Drell, Alexandria Kiwanis, participates in a lively discussion.



Gov. Marcel Lashover presents International Trustee Tim Sheppard with a special gift.



Natchitoches Kiwanis Club



Greenville Kiwanis Club



Ascension Kiwanis Club



Leadership Development Coordinator Greg Beard lead a panel discussion on Club Fundraising. The panel included the Kiwanis Clubs of Ascension, Greenville and Opelousas.



Ponchatoula Kiwanis Club

Special Thanks to Our Sponsors!

★ Natchitoches Historic District Development Commission

★ J&J Exterminating

★ BOM Bank ★ City Bank

Laissez les bons temps rouler with Kiwanis!



DCON 2026

Kenner, LA

July 31 - August 2

Registration	Early Registration Deadline: 6/12/2026 Base Reg: \$165 Bundle: \$250	Register HERE Online ONLY Checks or mailings NOT accepted
Location	Hilton New Orleans Airport 901 Airline Dr Kenner, LA 70062	Reservation LINK \$129/night Room Block closes: July 9, 2026
Sponsorships & Program Ads	Promote your business, club, officers, & more! Deadline: July 1, 2026	Sponsorship Opportunities & Form Program Ad Form
House of Delegates & Elections	Certified delegates will elect the 2026-2027 Governor, Governor-Elect, & Vice Governor and vote on bylaw amendment(s)	Club Delegate Form Deadline: July 17, 2026 Bylaws Amendment 1 Vice Governor Candidacy Form Deadline: June 1, 2026
Awards & Contests	Deadline: June 15, 2026	Firefighter of the Year Lawperson of the Year Layperson of the Year Teacher of the Year Facebook Award Newsletter Award Hall of Fame

DCON WEBSITE

Mark Your Calendar!

2026 Club Leadership Education

Interactive Virtual Sessions on Tuesdays at 6PM

June 30th: Membership Chair

July 7th: Treasurer

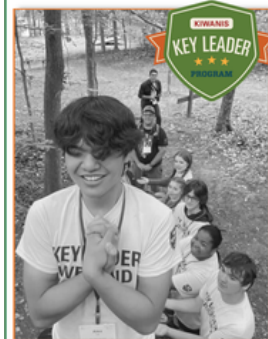
July 14th: Secretary

July 21st: President

Zoom links can be found at:
www.LaMissTenn.org



KEY LEADER®



West Tennessee

Key Leader

April 24-26, 2026
Camp Lakeshore
Eva, TN

Key Leader South

Nov 14-15, 2026
Camp Istrouma
Greenwell Springs, LA



Key Leader is a weekend retreat for high school and graduating 8th grade students that empowers them to become more caring and confident leaders.



DCON 2026

Please Join Us for a Fantastic Service Project at DCON!

By Cathy Simmons, DCON Service Chair

The Ronald McDonald House of Southeast Louisiana (RMH) is located on the campus of Children’s Hospital in New Orleans. RMH helps ease the financial and emotional burdens families face as they access critical care for their children. They are that home away from home, offering free accommodations, volunteer-provided meals, transportation when needed, a food pantry, and a support system like no other.

The service project we will be doing at District Convention, is making 100-150 activity packs for the kids, as well as their parents. Kits will be age appropriate and include items to use foster creativity (stencils, markers, crayons...), mind games (puzzles, mad libs...), mini crafts (bracelets, magnets...) to bring a little bit of joy into their treatment, while staying at RMH.

How can you help? Soooo glad you asked! The project is 2 parts, so ALL Kiwanis clubs have the opportunity to participate. Part 1 – a list of activity items will be posted on the district website for clubs to donate.

You can bring these items with you to convention; send with another club if you are not attending; or donate funds to the district designated for the DCON project. Part 2 is at the convention, Saturday, August 2nd. We will gather after the Fellowship Luncheon to divide the items into age appropriate categories and fill the activity kits.

In addition to filling the kits, there will be an “inspiration table” at DCON with crayons, markers and blank notecards, where you can take 5 minutes to compose a note to a child, receiving medical treatment. Stop by and take 5 minutes to make a difference and send a loving message to a child at the Ronald McDonald House.

Thank YOU for being the ONE who is making a DIFFERENCE in the life of a child and their family!



Cat



Growing Today, Serving Tomorrow

By John Fry, District Membership Chair



Healthy membership is the heartbeat of that mission. Every new member brings fresh ideas, new energy, and expanded capacity to reach children and youth who depend on caring adults in their communities. When our clubs grow stronger, so does our ability to mentor, feed, educate, and encourage the next generation.

The true legacy of Kiwanis is not only what we accomplish this year, but what we inspire in the years ahead. The children we serve today will one day lead our communities, and the example we set—of compassion, leadership, and service—will echo far beyond our meetings and projects.

As members of Kiwanis International, we know that strong communities begin with a simple but powerful commitment: serving children. When Kiwanians gather—like we recently did in Natchitoches, Louisiana for our Mid-Year Educational Conference—we are reminded that service is more than projects and programs. It is an investment in the future.

But membership is not simply about numbers—it is about purpose. It is about inviting others to experience the joy of service and helping them discover how one hour, one project, or one act of kindness can change a young life. When we build vibrant clubs today, we create a foundation that will serve children for decades to come.

As we return home from Mid-Year, may we carry with us a renewed commitment: to grow our membership, strengthen our clubs, and continue building a brighter future for the children we serve.

Because when Kiwanis grows, kids win—and the next generation of service begins.



Congratulations to our Gold Star Clubs for achieving a net positive membership increase for the 2024-2025 Kiwanis Year! Gold Star Clubs were recognized at the Mid-Year Education Conference in Natchitoches on March 21st. See page 6 for the list of winners.



Executive Director Jen Robertson presents checks to the Kiwanis Clubs of Opelousas and Greenville for the Make the District Pay incentive at Mid-Year. Both clubs gained a 25% or more net growth in membership for the 2024-2025 Kiwanis Year.

Congratulations to Our Newest Cubs!

By Tiffany LaPorte, District Bulletin Editor

THE KIWANIS CLUB OF MOREHOUSE

Our new **Kiwanis Club of Morehouse** in Bastrop, LA was organized on the evening of October 23rd with 21 members and is now up to 27! Congratulations to the new club officers: President, Hunter Thomas, President-Elect Randy Williams, Secretary Jim Ellingburg, and Treasurer Trenton Perkins. The new Board Members are Cindy Hendrix, Darry Green, Carol Lord, James Williams, and Lisa Chafford.

The new club hosted its first successful project on December 20th, an Annual Christmas Toy Drive where they packed an ambulance provided by Pafford Emergency Medical Services full of toys to be distributed to children ages 2-12 at Robinson-Williams Restoration of Hope Community Center.



THE KIWANIS CLUB OF MID MISSISSIPPI DELTA

Our newest **Kiwanis Club of Mid Mississippi Delta** in Bolivar County, MS organized on January 22nd with 22 members! It was a great turnout, and we expect more to join! Congratulations to the new Club President, Clayton Barksdale, and Club Secretary, Gloria McKnight! We are excited to launch this new service organization in our community!



WELCOME TO THE KIWANIS FAMILY!

Reflects new membership from 12/22/25 to 3/27/26

Mark Adams, <i>Greater Ouachita</i>	Alison Figueroa, <i>Dawn Busters</i>	Jamie Perez, <i>Natchitoches</i>
Jennifer Adams-Williams, <i>Mid MS Delta</i>	John Flynn, <i>Alexandria</i>	Lindsey Peyton, <i>Mid MS Delta</i>
Michael Armand, <i>Cortana</i>	Al Gardes, <i>Dawn Busters</i>	Stephanie Plescia, <i>Camellia City</i>
Dianne Arnold, <i>Mid MS Delta</i>	John Goins, <i>East Livingston</i>	Peggy Poche, <i>New Orleans</i>
Daryl Baillio, <i>Alexandria</i>	Eric Granger, <i>Lafayette</i>	Mary Powell, <i>Mid MS Delta</i>
Emily Baker, <i>Dyersburg</i>	Aimee Hall, <i>Ascension</i>	Shayla Purifoy, <i>Bluff City</i>
Clayton Barksdale, <i>Mid MS Delta</i>	Dalton Hallman, <i>Pearl</i>	Alaina Robertson, <i>Ruston</i>
Rasheda Barksdale, <i>Mid MS Delta</i>	Philip C. Harris, <i>Ruston</i>	Mark Roberts, <i>Alexandria</i>
Alexander Barnes, <i>Thibodaux</i>	Alan Hasenkampf, <i>Moisant</i>	Kathleen Rodrigue, <i>Thibodaux</i>
Donald Barrilleaux, <i>Thibodaux</i>	Marie Hasenkampf, <i>Moisant</i>	Wayne Rodrigue, <i>Thibodaux</i>
Abigail Beadle, <i>Eat St. Mary</i>	Colin Herbert, <i>Acadia</i>	Nick Rogers, <i>East St. Mary</i>
Allison Bent, <i>Dawn Busters</i>	Terita Hewlett, <i>Bluff City</i>	Mike Ruiz, <i>Dawn Busters</i>
Susan Blue, <i>Southwest Louisiana</i>	James Hoffmann, <i>Gulfport</i>	Daniel Rush, <i>Amite</i>
Kara Bolden, <i>Mid MS Delta</i>	Kaylee Holtzclaw, <i>Ruston</i>	Arvie Seals, <i>Mid MS Delta</i>
Claire Bourgeois, <i>Thibodaux</i>	Will Hooker, <i>Mid MS Delta</i>	Jacob Simms, <i>Cortana</i>
Robert Bowman, <i>St. Bernard-Arabi</i>	Paulette Howze, <i>Mid MS Delta</i>	Laura Siu-Nguyen, <i>Cortana</i>
Nancy Boykin, <i>Laurel</i>	Sam Joffary, <i>Dawn Busters</i>	Genita Smith, <i>Greenville</i>
Margaret Campbell, <i>Pascagoula</i>	Twanna Johnson, <i>Greenville</i>	Michael Smith, <i>Ponchatoula</i>
Kyle Evans Carnahan, <i>Ruston</i>	James Johnson, <i>Ponchatoula</i>	Shelley Smith, <i>Ponchatoula</i>
Katherine Charles, <i>Opelousas</i>	Ola Kirk, <i>Mid MS Delta</i>	Connie Soileau, <i>Central</i>
Howell Chiasson, <i>Thibodaux</i>	Charles Krivanek, <i>Acadiana</i>	Anne Marie St. Claire, <i>New Orleans</i>
Joe Childs, <i>Mid MS Delta</i>	Brandon Landry, <i>East Livingston</i>	Dale St. John, <i>Greater Covington</i>
Benjamin Comeaux, <i>Thibodaux</i>	Christy Landry, <i>Thibodaux</i>	Bradley Stanback, <i>Columbus</i>
Cynthia Davidson, <i>Dawn Busters</i>	Austin Leboeuf, <i>Thibodaux</i>	Michael Stewart, <i>Natchitoches</i>
Cheryl Davis, <i>New Albany</i>	Cindi Lofton, <i>Mid MS Delta</i>	Reid Stewart, <i>East St. Mary</i>
Jillian Dickerson-Landry, <i>Lafayette</i>	Stephen Lorio, <i>Thibodaux</i>	Reed Streva, <i>Lafayette</i>
Emma Dugas, <i>Thibodaux</i>	Melanie Mauney, <i>Dawn Busters</i>	Cody Stubblefield, <i>New Albany</i>
Jade Duplesis, <i>Opelousas</i>	Steven Maxwell, <i>Alexandria</i>	Robert Theriot, <i>Thibodaux</i>
Daniel Echols, <i>Greater Ouachita</i>	Gloria McKnight, <i>Mid MS Delta</i>	Billy Trotter, <i>Mid MS Delta</i>
Jeremy Ellis, <i>Northshore Mandeville</i>	Brittney Mendel, <i>Greater Covington</i>	Lance Trotti, <i>Thibodaux</i>
Seth T. Evans, <i>Ruston</i>	Colton Moffatt, <i>Central</i>	Jude Vasquez, <i>East St. Mary</i>
Norma Evans-Seals, <i>Mid MS Delta</i>	Margaret Moran, <i>Mid MS Delta</i>	John Wagley, <i>Opelousas</i>
Patrick Faulkner, <i>Greater Covington</i>	John Nackley, <i>Cortana</i>	Wendy Wattigney, <i>Moisant</i>
Felix Figueroa, <i>Dawn Busters</i>	Cason O'Banion, <i>Cortana</i>	Tammie Wilson, <i>East St. Mary</i>

LaMissTenn Signature Projects Selected for Kiwanis International Contest

The LaMissTenn District of Kiwanis is pleased to announce its selections for the 2026 KI Signature Project Contest. The project chosen from Group 1 (clubs with 27 or fewer members) is “Kiwanis Kids” submitted by the **Kiwanis Club of Opelousas**. The project chosen from Group 2 (clubs with 28 or greater members) is “Annual Trivia Night” submitted by the **Kiwanis Club of East St. Mary**. The LaMissTenn Kiwanis District received a total of 13 project submissions.

Opelousas Kiwanis Signature Project Group 1: Kiwanis Kids

By Carrie Richard, Opelousas Kiwanis Club



Each year the **Kiwanis Club of Opelousas** coordinates with low-income public schools in the area to honor most improved students in grades 3-6. Every 9 weeks, the club’s Kiwanis Kids program motivates, inspires and recognizes students who put forth their best effort. Students who are chosen by their teachers as Kiwanis Kids receive a certificate and a gift card. At the end of the year, the third graders’ names go into a drawing for a boy and a girl bike from each school represented and middle schoolers are entered into a drawing for a \$100 gift card. Every 9 weeks when the Kiwanis Club of Opelousas hosts Kiwanis Kids programs, the club posts the children's group picture along with the Kiwanians represented on the club’s Facebook page.

East St. Mary Kiwanis Signature Project Group 2: Annual Trivia Night

By Debbie Stevens, East St. Mary Kiwanis Club

East St. Mary Kiwanis Club’s Annual Trivia Night has become one of the largest events in the community. The sold out fundraiser helps serve 7 Terrific Kids & 7 BUGS programs, 4 Key Clubs, 4 scholarships, 2 nursing homes, an assistant living facility, the local Center of Hope/ARC, teacher appreciation events, a teen center, a JROTC and Scouts of America. All 17 area schools receive \$500 from the proceeds as well as a "school closet" at 8 elementary, 3 junior high, and 3 high schools. This event serves the local food bank with a food drive that is held that night. Funds are also provided throughout the year as community needs arise.



LaMissTenn Signature Projects Group I Submissions

Ascension Kiwanis Signature Project: Annual Bowling Tournament

By Boni Pater, Ascension Kiwanis Club



The Ascension Kiwanis Club holds its Annual Bowling Tournament in May. The tournament has become the club's signature fundraising project with all proceeds going towards projects helping children in the community. Participating in bowling for a good cause fosters community engagement. Teams are comprised of families, businesses for team building, Kiwanis Clubs, Key Clubs, scouts, organizations, and friends who seek to strike up a good time while supporting Kiwanis. The last event showcased over 50 silent auction items and door prizes.

The project helps the club sponsor a BUGs program at Bluff Ridge Primary School and a Key Club at St. Amant High School as well as provide Christmas presents for needy children and Thanksgiving food boxes for families. The club is in the process of sponsoring a second Key Club.

Central Kiwanis Signature Project: Sensory Toy Drive

By Scott Parker, Central Kiwanis Club

The Kiwanis Club of Central's Sensory Toy Drive serves children ages 0–18 with special needs, including autism, sensory processing disorder, ADHD, and Down syndrome, in Central and the greater Baton Rouge area. The project supports students and families connected to public and private schools, churches, therapy and support organizations. Many of these children come from low-income families or attend schools and organizations that lack the funding to provide adequate sensory resources. Sensory tools are often expensive and not covered by insurance, placing an added burden on families already overwhelmed by medical and therapy costs.

Through this project, children receive thoughtfully assembled sensory toy bags tailored to their individual needs, helping reduce anxiety and meltdowns, improve focus and learning, support therapy goals, and provide calming relief for both the child and their caregivers. In its first year, the Sensory Toy Drive impacted 200–250 children, with a goal of reaching 250–300 children this year. The project helps serve a population whose needs are often invisible, ensuring these children and families receive comfort, dignity, and meaningful support where resources are limited.



LaMissTenn Signature Projects Group I Submissions

New Orleans Signature Project: Ween Dream

By Toni Shirley, New Orleans Kiwanis Club

The New Orleans Kiwanis Club's Ween Dream signature project serves children whose lives are often shaped by illness, disability, and financial hardship. Many of the children we support are medically fragile or immune-compromised, making safety a critical concern. Others rely on wheelchairs or walkers and rarely see costumes designed with their bodies or mobility devices in mind. Immune-compromised children require brand-new costumes to protect their health. Adaptive costumes that work with wheelchairs or walkers are often difficult to find and financially out of reach. Inclusive options that truly reflect a child's needs and identity are limited or nonexistent. Ween Dream meets this need in a simple but powerful way: we make sure these children receive a safe, new, gently used, and inclusive costume. By providing the costume itself, we help ensure that every child has the opportunity to participate, to imagine, and to feel seen.



Pontchartrain Kiwanis Signature Project: Bikes for Books

By Deidre Charlot, Pontchartrain Kiwanis Club

The Kiwanis Club of Pontchartrain (KCP) signature project is Bikes for Books (B4B), a reading initiative, at New Orleans area elementary schools. Students voluntarily read age-appropriate books and complete book reports on a template KCP provides. Literacy is challenging for New Orleans area students and few attain mastery. KCP's B4B challenges students to read with the hope of opening their eyes to the wonders of the world. KCP recognizes each student who completes 5 or more book reports with a Certificate of Participation. Students who complete 10 or more reports receive a McDonald's gift card. The student who completes the most books reports in his or her grade receives a bike, bike helmet and bike lock.



Zachary Kiwanis Signature Project: Reading Program

By Milisa York, Zachary Kiwanis Club

The Zachary Kiwanis Club's signature project is a reading program that promotes early literacy and helps children become lifelong learners. Club members traveled to The Zachary Early Learning Center and read "The Caring Me I Want To Be" to the Pre K children. Each child received their own book to take home. The club purchased and gave out 282 books! The book addresses the fundamentals of every day values. The Mayor of Zachary, the Zachary Police Chief and the Zachary School District Superintendent come out to read to the children as well.



LaMissTenn Signature Projects Group 2 Submissions

Algiers Kiwanis Signature Project: Pancake Breakfast with Santa



By Linda Leger, Algiers Kiwanis Club

On December 13th the **Kiwanis Club of Algiers** hosted its 35th Annual Pancake Breakfast, the club's signature project, with Santa at the Aurora Methodist Church in Algiers. Pancake, sausage, milk, juice & coffee breakfast was served, pictures with Santa Claus were available along with many books for kids to choose from to take home. A craft room with several craft stations kept the children busy. Key Clubbers from Ednar Karr and AOL along with Boy Scout Troops 64 & 796 assisted in the setting up on Friday evening and busing tables the day of the event. Many hours are spent preparing for this annual event selling tickets, obtaining sponsors & silent auction items, etc. Proceeds this year were donated to "Camp Challenge" a camp for kids with all types of cancer and their siblings. This event has been loved by generations for years.



Dawn Busters Kiwanis Signature Project: Community Bingo

By Lenorah Durel, Dawn Busters Kiwanis Club

In December 2025, the **Dawn Busters Kiwanis Club** of Metairie, LA, proudly transformed the excitement of Community Bingo into meaningful service for military families through our partnership with Operation Homefront. Funds raised from our previous bingo event made it possible for our club to adopt 3 military families for Christmas and provide 50 food boxes to local military families during the Operation Homefront holiday distribution event. The majority of the funding that supports Operation Homefront at our local base comes directly from Dawn Busters Kiwanis fundraising efforts.

Our Community Bingo is one of our signature fundraising events, featuring 9 games of Bingo with prizes generously donated by our sponsors. The evening's grand prize is a cruise for two, creating tremendous excitement and community participation. Guests also enjoy a silent auction, a 50/50 raffle, and dinner—making it a fun and meaningful night. Most of our expenses are covered by donations.



"Supporting Operation Homefront allows us to directly impact the families who sacrifice daily for our country," said Club President Jacqueline Dardano. "When we adopt families for Christmas and provide food assistance, we are not just giving gifts—we are delivering hope, dignity, and a reminder that their service is valued and appreciated."

LaMissTenn Signature Projects Group 2 Submissions

Germantown Kiwanis Signature Project: Shoe Us Some Love

By Linda Fisher, Germantown Kiwanis Club

The Germantown Kiwanis Club's signature project is *Shoe Us Some Love*. Shoes collected are more than footwear—they're a lifeline for individuals and families living in developing nations. Due to systemic poverty and limited access to education and economic opportunity, many struggle to earn a sustainable income. This project supports individuals who are building micro-businesses, providing them with inventory they can sell to support themselves and their families.

Through this effort, 800 pairs of shoes were collected and are being distributed to micro-entrepreneurs in developing countries, helping them earn a living wage and take meaningful steps toward economic independence. They are not only providing a living for families, but shoes for those in poverty. In turn, the club was paid \$205.40 for the shoes and those funds will go to a non-profit chosen by the club's SLPs.



Ponchatoula Kiwanis Signature Project: Books for Kids!

By Shelley Zahn, Ponchatoula Kiwanis Club

The Kiwanis Club of Ponchatoula provides an assortment of brand new books for every 2nd grader at DC Reeves Elementary School to receive a free book of their very own to take home. This is now an annual signature project that the club and the community look forward to!

This is one of the club's favorite projects to promote reading throughout the community. As a partner with Tangipahoa Parish School System Literacy Program, the club is honored to participate and show support.

The children are always excited to be able to choose their own book to keep. Ponchatoula Kiwanis provides all types of different books of interest so the students can have a wide variety of choices. Club members love meeting the teachers and talking with the students about how important reading is. Students also share stories about why they choose the book they choose.



LaMissTenn Signature Projects Group 2 Submissions

St. Bernard-Arabi Kiwanis Signature Project: Krewe of Majestic Miracles

By Carol Saling, St. Bernard-Arabi Kiwanis Club

The Kiwanis Club of St. Bernard-Arabi's signature project is the Krewe of Majestic Miracles, a Mardi Gras Ball for special needs individuals (children & adults) and their families. An event where guests can enjoy themselves without any judgement.

Every student in special education classes in area public schools and Aktion Club members receive invitations. The event is also advertised on social media and through emails. Club members make appearances on several TV news programs pitching the ball.

This Mardi Gras Ball is one of the most anticipated events every year. The smiles on the faces of our special guests just make your heart melt as they enjoy the merriment. They all anxiously wait to see if their name is called to be on the court as we pick a king, queen and court from the guests. With a live second line band, photobooth, door prizes and abundant food, Kiwanians and guests escape life even if it is just for a little while.



Tupelo Kiwanis Signature Project: Kiwanis Drawdown

By Candace Hunt, Tupelo Kiwanis Club

The Tupelo Kiwanis Club is dedicated to enriching the lives of children in the community. The club's annual signature project, The Drawdown, aims to raise funds to provide essential resources for children. This past year, Tupelo Kiwanis focused on acquiring new books for elementary schools. The objective was to raise funds to purchase age appropriate books for local elementary schools, promoting literacy and a love of reading among children.

We donated money to the elementary schools to supply books for their vending machines. Children win tokens for accomplishing something they have struggled with or for good behavior. They use these tokens in the vending machines to receive books. Many children in our community lack access to quality books. We can help bridge the gap and support our children's educational journey. This project targets children in grades K-5.



Kiwanis International Convention

Registration: Mar 2 - Apr 13, 2026 = \$509



ICON Website

KIWANIS AMPLIFY

LEARNING AND LIVING LEADERSHIP OUTLOUD

Build your leadership skills. Improve your career, your community and yourself. Kiwanis Amplify is a leadership program for those who want to amplify their ability to lead in all aspects of their lives.

Registration for Kiwanis Amplify, closes April 30th. You can register for the core program for just \$50. If you'd like to dive deeper, you can add bonus content for just \$10 more, giving you access to 2 additional modules.

For more information and to register, click [HERE](#)

Kiwanis Amplify



Registration is now open!

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!

By Betty Carter, District Foundation Vice President



The District Foundation Board wants to THANK YOU for your generous donation of 38 AWESOME GIFT-BASKETS to support our District Foundation Mid-Year Conference Raffle. We can't thank you enough for your generosity & continued support. We couldn't do it without you! Thirty-eight AWESOME clubs/individuals donated to the District Foundation Mid-Year Gift-Basket Raffle!

Special THANKS to the Following Clubs & Individuals:

- | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| • Acadiana-Lafayette | • eLaMissTenn | • Natchez Trace | • Shreveport |
| • Alexandria | • Germantown | • Natchitoches (2) | • Southern Hills |
| • Ascension | • Greenville (2) | • New Orleans | • Southwest LA |
| • Baton Rouge | • John & Cathy Fry | • Opelousas | • St. Bernard-Arabi |
| • Big Easy | • Lafayette | • Ponchatoula | • Third District |
| • Biloxi | • Louisville | • Pontchartrain | • Tupelo |
| • Bluff City | • Martin | • Rankin County | • Union City |
| • Cortana | • Memphis | • Red Stick | • Vicksburg |
| • Dawn Busters | • Millington | • Ruston | • Zachary |



Heather Givens was the proud winner of the framed River of Life raffle the Foundation held at the Mid-Year Education Conference.



The Foundation Board members hard at work during the Mid-Year Education Conference in Natchitoches on March 21st. The Foundation raised over \$4,000 for the clubs in the LaMissTenn District!

Past District Officers are Mentors

By Ralph Carter, Past District Officer Organization Chair

Past District Officers (PDO) of the great and historic LaMissTenn District of Kiwanis have a unique opportunity during this time of year—guiding other Kiwanians toward leadership. Clubs are currently planning their succession plans of leadership, and the district is as well. Governor-Elect Andrew Dozier has filled several of his leadership team with Lt. Governors; however, not all divisions have their key Kiwanis leader yet. As PDO members, you have experience as Lt. Governors and may be able to help Governor-Elect Dozier identify and A.S.K. fellow Kiwanians to set up to district leadership.

PDO possess a wealth of institutional knowledge and resources. You are Mentors and can expertly guide new leaders, by sharing proven strategies and helping them navigate the complexities of leadership. Help shape future leaders by actively mentoring and molding the next generation of District leaders.



Key Leader North

By Linda Ramsey, Key Leader North District Administrator



We could use a couple of additional student facilitators, and we could use quite a few more male regular participants as well as a few more female participants.

We are asking for an earlier registration deadline of April 3, 2026, with adds and deletes being possible for the week of April 4-9, and substitutions only being allowed from April 10-17, 2026. So, if you are thinking about attending or you know someone who is, please get registered.

Our website is www.wtnkeyleader.org. There is information there about what happens during the course of the weekend as well as what you need to bring with you when you go to Key Leader Weekend.

We have a new curriculum this year, so the course content will be different. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to shoot me an email (mramsey2@utm.edu) or give me a call (731-225-7729)! Thanks for your help in making a difference in the life of a child!



Hello Kiwanis! It's the time of year that I need to request your assistance in recruiting students and chaperones to attend **Kiwanis Key Leader Weekend** at Lakeshore Camp and Retreat in Eva, Tennessee on April 24-26, 2026. As of this morning, we have 49 folks registered. We could use a few more chaperones, particularly males.

Aspire to Inspire: Either You Will or You Won't

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



From ancient Greek logic ... and maybe before ... we have inherited the concept of a "dichotomy." A dichotomy is very useful in analyzing something, in explaining something and in making decisions. Here is a definition of dichotomy.

A dichotomy (*/daɪ'kɒləmi/*) is a partition of a whole into two parts. In other words, this couple of parts must be:

- jointly exhaustive: everything must belong to one part or the other, and
- mutually exclusive: nothing can belong simultaneously to both parts.

Shakespeare's HAMLET is famous for the dichotomy in his soliloquy.... "To be, or not to be, that is the question...." Dichotomies are everywhere. We use them daily without realizing it. Should I go to the grocery store or not. Should I watch a movie on TV or not? Should I keep

reading this article, or not?.... and does it have anything to do with Kiwanis, or not?

Here is a Kiwanis dichotomy: "either you attended the LaMissTenn District Mid-Year Conference in Natchitoches or you did not." If you did, you participated in the fellowship, fun and educational opportunities. If you did not attend, you missed all that and so much more that is available at Kiwanis Midwinter Conferences: to wit, seeing old friends and making new ones, hearing who won awards, maybe winning a great basket in the raffle thereby helping our Foundation fund projects for children by raising money, etc. MYCs, DCONs, ICONs and other Kiwanis gatherings are loaded with benefits, both tangible and intangible. Hey, that's another dichotomy. The intangible benefits of attending Kiwanis conferences, meetings, conventions, etc. all are often more valuable to you than you realize.... rekindling motivation, resolve and enthusiasm.

That dichotomy concept applies to so much more in our Kiwanis family. Either you recruited a new member for your club, or you did not. Either you participated in a club project to benefit children or you did not. The list could go on and on.

Here we are, halfway in the Kiwanis year. Either you are proud of your contribution to our Kiwanis mission, or you are not. Could you have done more?

At one of the Kiwanis International conventions (ICON) the keynote speaker was John O'Leary who is an extremely inspirational speaker. He told of having been severely burned as a child and not expected to live. John said a major part of his survival and later success in life was due to sportscaster Jack Buck. [Go on the internet and read the story.... It is incredible and will inspire you.]

In helping and motivating John O'Leary, Jack kept asking himself, "What more can I do? What more can I do? What more can I do?" That is a good question for us all. Then will action follow the answer? or not?

Here is one final, closing dichotomy for us as Kiwanians: Will we get off our duffs and do more for the children we serve.... or not? Either you will or you won't.



the POSSIBILITY PROJECT



APRIL 2026 UPDATE

By Lenny Simmons, Kiwanis Children's Fund District Chair

As of March 1, 2026, The Kiwanis Children's Fund has collected in cash and pledges **\$10,434,349** of its **\$25,000,000** goal to help **10 Million Children** through the Possibility Project. In our District alone Kiwanians and Kiwanis Clubs have donated **\$281,127** in cash and pledges. It takes **\$2.25** to take care of the needs of one child. So far, our clubs have helped **124,9453 children!** These funds will be used for grants to our Kiwanis Clubs locally and world-wide to provide needed services for our children. I want to tell you about our **Micro Grants**. If your club has 35 members or fewer and is in good standing with Kiwanis International and the Kiwanis Children's Fund, you may qualify to apply for a microgrant of US\$250-1,000!

Your project must:

- Be a service project enhancing the lives of young children and youth in your community
- Support at least one of the three Kiwanis causes: health and nutrition, education and literacy, and youth leadership development
- Be upcoming or in process (not yet completed) when grant payment is received

Advantages of the Microgrant Program:

- Shorter application than the traditional club grant program
- Less funding required from other sources - Matching funds will not be required.
- Shorter decision period - Applications received by the 1st of each month will receive a decision via email by the 15th of the same month.
- Faster distribution of funds - Distribution of the funds will begin in December of each year. After that, grant recipients will receive funds within two-three weeks of the application's acceptance.

Other requirements:

- Grants cannot be used for donations to organizations, salaries, scholarships/fellowships, charter fees, sponsorships, training expenses, travel, lodging, capital construction projects or purchase of land/buildings.
- A report must be submitted at the end of the 12-month grant period.
- Once issued a grant, a club will be eligible to apply for another grant two years after submitting the final report.

Each year, the application period for the Microgrant Program is October 1 – July 1. Grant applications will be considered in the order received until funds are depleted. Applications are accepted through Foundant, the Kiwanis Children's Fund grant processing system.

For more information, please contact Kiwanis with questions at grants@kiwanis.org. You can also call **1-800-KIWANIS** and ask for the Kiwanis Children's Fund.

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 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, 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!**

www.LaMissTenn.org

St. Bernard Aktion Club Recharterers

By Carol Saling, St. Bernard-Arabi Kiwanis

The Kiwanis Club of St Bernard – Arabi rechartered the **Aktion Club of St. Bernard** at The Arc of Greater New Orleans, Chalmette Center in October 2025. In January a Charter Luncheon was held honoring the officers and charter members of the Aktion Club. The club members enjoyed a delicious lunch, and Lieutenant Governor of Division 4A Nick Koepp was on hand to help pin the new members and officers. Kiwanis President Amanda Hardesty presented the Charter Certificate to Matthew Davis, the Aktion Club’s President. The other Aktion Club officers are Cicely Simmons, Vice President; Michael Reed, Secretary; and Ashton Stewart, Treasurer.

One much anticipated activity is choosing the Aktion Hero, inspired by the Terrific Kids Program. The honoree must demonstrate the values of “helping their family, friends, and community.” At the luncheon, Michael Reed was excited when he was named the Aktion Hero for October-December 2025. The honoree receives a mask and cape along with a certificate proclaiming them as Aktion Hero.

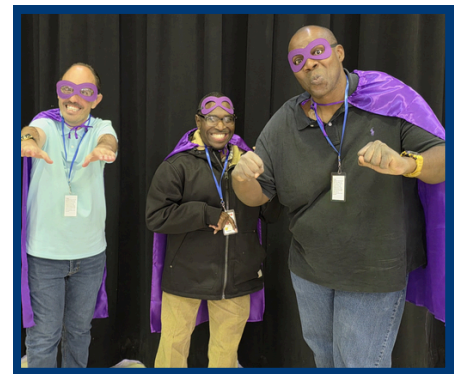
The club meets monthly but also stays busy helping with other Kiwanis projects like Reading Around the World (RAW) and AgMagic.



Aktion Club of St. Bernard members



Kiwanis Advisors Lynda Pitre and Carol Saling present Aktion Hero award to Michael Reed.



Aktion Heroes Matthew Davis, Michael Reed & Raymond Spencer



Kiwanis Club President Amanda Hardesty presents Certificate to Matthew Davis



President Matthew Davis signs the Charter certificate.



Lt Governor Nick Koepp pinned Aktion Club VP Cicely Simmons.

Algiers Kiwanis Reaches Out!

By Linda Leger, Algiers Kiwanis Club

KIWANIS PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Proceeds from the 2025 **Algiers Kiwanis** Pancake Breakfast were donated to the Ronald McDonald House in New Orleans and used to purchase a nutritional cart that will be used at Ochsner Children's Hospital. It took a while to have the cart designed and built but well worth waiting. Snacks and drinks will be given out from the cart. On January 29th, Evans Thibodeaux, David & Bobbie Whiddon, President Pat Bruce, Paula Frank, Linda Leger, Brenda Sinclair and Marty Bruce were there to see the cart before it hits the hospital unit.



JOEY'S HOPE

On February 5th, Algiers members along with members of Edna Karr & Academy of Our Lady Key Clubs work together during the "Joey's Hope Signature Project" filling bags of snack foods to be distributed to two local schools. Paula Frank shows her excitement to work the project.



MARDI GRAS BREAKFAST

Members of the Algiers Kiwanis showed up early Mardi Gras morning, February 17th, to serve breakfast to the 4th District Police Dept in New Orleans before they took to the street to protect the community.

MARDI GRAS PARTY

On February 13th, Woldenberg residents enjoyed the Mardi Gras Party thrown for them by Algiers Kiwanis.



Ascension and Central Kiwanis Fight Hunger

By Donna Leggett, Ascension Kiwanis Club

Volunteers from the **Kiwanis Clubs of Ascension** and **Central** spent Saturday morning fighting hunger at the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank on January 10th. We assembled 517 quality food boxes for individual families and filled pallets of boxes of drinks and cereal. We had so much fun serving together! There was some singing, dancing and plenty of smiling faces knowing that we made a difference. The Kiwanis Clubs of Ascension and Central are committed to serving at the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank as a group once a quarter.



A Club, Helping a Club, Helping a Club, Helping a Community

By Angel Ivey, Bluff City Kiwanis Club

When Kiwanis clubs work together for the betterment of the community, greatness happens.

In January, **Kiwanis Bluff City** President, Angel Ivey, spoke to the **Kiwanis Club of Germantown** about the importance of marketing and social media. In that speech, she introduced her club’s ongoing community service project - assisting with food insecurities at Winchester Elementary School. The school has approximately 425 students. 299 students face food insecurities. Bluff City members visit the school weekly to provide hands on support by stuffing food bags for the kids to take home each Friday. In addition, the club supports the community food pantry, building boxes for over 50 local families each week.

When President Angel shared the story of Winchester Elementary, Kiwanis Germantown sprang into AKTION! Germantown’s own, Tom Thompkins, suggested that the Germantown Aktion Club build Bologna & Cheese sandwiches for the elementary students. **The Germantown Aktion Club** and the **Madonna Aktion Club** donated 300 sandwiches to Kiwanis Bluff City who delivered them to Winchester Elementary. More importantly, the Aktion Club, blessed the sandwiches and prayed for the students. Smiling kids created a video for Kiwanis Germantown and the Aktion club.



Cortana Cares for the Community!

By Wanda Magee, Cortana Kiwanis Club



BUG PARTY

Cortana Kiwanis honored 89 Broadmoor Elementary 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students who worked hard and at Mid-Term had brought up their grades. They had cookies and juice and were presented with a BUG certificate and magnet. Bring Up Grades is a Kiwanis program that helps teachers motivate students to achieve academically. Attending was Jim Frederick, Tammy & Keith McDavid, Pam & Chuck Morgan, Heather Folks-Givens, and Wanda Magee & her sister Brenda Robbins. Principal Kalan Jones was a great help at the party and appreciates everything that Cortana Kiwanis does for Broadmoor.



MARDI GRAS PARADE

Cortana members, Pam Morgan, John Nackley, Heather Folks-Givens, and Wanda Magee organized throws and walked with the Pre-K students as they threw items to older students lined up around the basketball court. Cortana members donated toys, beads, stuffed animals, candy, cups, etc. which were delivered by Tammy & Keith McDavid.



JAMBALAYA DINNERS

After Cortana's meeting Thursday, February 26, 2026, Don MacGregor, Tommy Mackey, Troy Pater, Wanda Magee, Brenda Robbins, and Heather Folks-Givens prepared 250 meals for a fundraiser to enable band members to attend a music competition in May at Six Flags in Georgia. One hundred percent of ticket sales went toward the student's cost of the trip.

Tommy Mackey said, "It's fun to be around those kids. They were all very courteous and had some big smiles – a tribute to their teacher/music director, Ms. Doretha."

Don MacGregor added, "We had a great time and we're thankful that Cortana can help these young people. I look forward to continuing to help in the future."

Band Director Doretha Williams said, "We appreciate all the love that Kiwanis showed to the students. Thanks so much!!!"



Dyersburg Hosts Annual Albert Fowlkes Pancake Day

By Sandy Tarkington, Dyersburg Kiwanis Club

Pancake Day is a community tradition for the **Kiwanis Club of Dyersburg**. Since the large griddle was purchased in 1969 with funds secured by long-time member Albert Fowlkes, members have been flipping pancakes for large crowds at this event. Appropriately so, the club voted to name the annual event in his honor in 2024.

We were happy to continue the tradition, serving over 500 people on February 28th. As a Key Club sponsor, Kiwanis Club of Dyersburg proudly included several Dyersburg High School student volunteers.

Money raised from the Pancake Day event goes toward projects that benefit children in the community. “Our big project over the past few years has been Kiwanis Park,” event coordinator Travis Miles explained.



The family of Albert Fowlkes, including a new addition since last year



Student volunteers and Dyersburg Kiwanis members Travis Miles, event coordinator, and Paul Stewart.



Just a few of the Dyersburg Kiwanis members who helped make this year's event a success

East Livingston: Casting for a Cause

By Kay Landry, East Livingston Kiwanis Club



The Kiwanis Club of East Livingston recently hosted its first annual bass tournament, Casting for a Cause, bringing together local anglers and community supporters for a day of fishing and fundraising. The event proved to be a great success, with 27 teams registering to compete and strong support from the community.

Participants launched early in the morning, spending the day on the water competing for the best catch while supporting a meaningful cause. Through entry fees, donations, and community contributions, the tournament raised more than \$6,000.

Proceeds from the event will be donated to CAS - Child Advocacy Services, an organization dedicated to advocating for abused and neglected children involved in the court system. CAS volunteers work to ensure that children in difficult situations have a voice and receive the support they need.

Members of the Kiwanis Club said they were thrilled with the turnout and the generosity shown by everyone who participated. The success of the first tournament highlights the community's commitment to helping children in need.

Organizers hope to make the bass tournament an annual event, continuing to grow participation and raise even more funds in the future projects in our community.



Greenville Kiwanis Serves Pancakes with a Purpose

By Angela Crooms, Greenville Kiwanis Club

On Saturday, February 28th from 6:30 am to 10:30 am, the **Kiwanis Club of Greenville** held its annual Pancake Breakfast at the Buster Brown Community Center in Greenville, MS. This special event brings together community members, families, and local leaders for a morning of great food and fellowship, all while supporting an important cause.

The Pancake Breakfast serves as a fundraiser to provide scholarships for deserving high school seniors in our community. Through the generosity of those who attend and support this event, we are able to invest in the future of our young people and help them pursue their educational goals.

Every ticket purchased and every plate served contributes directly to helping hardworking students take the next step toward college. These scholarships recognize students who have demonstrated academic excellence, leadership, and community involvement.

Beyond raising funds, the Pancake Breakfast is also an opportunity to strengthen community connections. Volunteers, sponsors, and guests all play an important role in making the event a success each year. Together, we are making a difference by investing in the education and success of the next generation.



Dads & Kids: Special Needs Mardi Gras Parade

By Carrie Richard, Opelousas Kiwanis Club



The Opelousas Kiwanis Club joined forces with the non-profit organization Dads and Kids for its 3rd Annual *Dads and Kids Special Needs Mardi Gras Parade*, held on February 13.

Elliot Mitchell, founder of Dads and Kids, partnered with the Opelousas Police Department and the Opelousas Kiwanis Club to visit four Kiwanis Kids schools, distributing Mardi Gras throws to special needs students. A special guest, the Cat in the Hat portrayed by Pastor Clarence Lazard, helped make the visits even more memorable for the children

The schools visited included:

- Creswell Elementary
- Grolee Elementary School
- Northeast Elementary
- Park Vista Elementary School

Opelousas Kiwanians who participated were: Treasurer Valerie Arceneaux (American Bank), President-Elect Carrie Richard (Dupre Carrier Godchaux), Board Member Jeremy Richard (Casa St. Landry Evangeline), Lashonda Lastrapes (St. Landry Parish School Board), Membership Chair Connie Shakesnider (Med-Express GMR), Jolee Woods (Anchored Scholars),

Joey Richard (Hollywood Cutz), and President Pam Vidrine.

A special thank you goes to Gary Vidrine for pulling the trailer and for his continued support of the club's mission.

This annual event remains one of the most heartwarming experiences for everyone involved. Seeing the joy on the children's faces as the parade arrives at their schools truly embodies what Kiwanis is all about—serving the children of the world.



New Orleans Kiwanis Serves Spaghetti, Love & Meatballs

By Cathy Simmons, New Orleans Kiwanis Club

One of our favorite projects ... cooking for the families of Ronald McDonald House! Each quarter, **Kiwanis Club of New Orleans** participates in their “Meals from the Heart” program, to prepare 35 healthy meals for the families staying at the house, while their children undergo medical treatment at nearby Children’s Hospital. This time, we did a traditional Spaghetti with homemade meatballs, caesar salad, garlic bread, ice tea and dessert. Cost for this project? \$126! Check out YOUR local Ronald McDonald house to see how YOU can make a difference!



Ponchatoula Kiwanis Donates to Food Pantry

By Pete Clark, Ponchatoula Kiwanis Club



The Ponchatoula Kiwanis Club collected food items to donate to the Ponchatoula High School food pantry. This idea originated from the **Ponchatoula High School Key Club** as we partnered with them to make this a success. The thought behind this is to have extra food items on hand for any student to help them stay fed and focused. Our club reached out to local business partners, community leaders, and residents to collect items. After our club collected the food items Key Clubbers came and picked up the food items to bring to the pantry.



Vicksburg's 32nd Annual Chili Feast is a Success!

By Tom Osburn, Vicksburg Kiwanis Club



At 6 am on Friday the 13th, **Vicksburg Kiwanis Club** members, Key Clubbers and District Governor Marcel Lashover met at the YMCA to begin cooking Chili. By 8:30 am they had 5 – 20-gallon pots of chili hot and ready to serve. At 9:15 am they rolled the first pot inside and began assembling meals. By 11 am about 1200 meals had been packed, sorted and loaded into vehicles for delivery. By the end of the day, they had cooked 140 gallons of chili and had served over 1900 meals.



Over \$21,000 was raised from this annual fundraiser. About half of the profits will be used for Key Club Scholarships. The rest will fund over 90% of the projects that the club conducts throughout the year.

The project requires a lot of effort from all club members and many members of the 4 Key Clubs that the Kiwanis Club sponsors. Not only does the club raise most of the funds needed, the Kiwanis Chili is well known throughout the community, with many businesses being long-time supporters.

Zachary Kiwanis: Recognizing Greatness!

By MiLisa York, Zachary Kiwanis Club

BUGs

The **Zachary Kiwanis Club** was very busy with BUGs in the month of January. Members gave out a total of 677 BUG awards to students who brought up grades at Rollins Place Elementary School, Zachary Elementary School and Copper Mill Elementary School. We so love the children of Zachary!

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Also, in February, the Zachary Kiwanis Club honored retired Fire Chief Danny Kimble with a Circle of Honor Award for his dedicated and tireless support given to the club. Clubs can support the LaMissTenn District Foundation by purchasing Circle of Honor Awards [HERE](#). The mission of the Foundation is to provide financial assistance for Kiwanis projects and programs within the LaMissTenn District.



Share Your Club's News!

By Tiffany LaPorte, District Bulletin Editor

Submit your article and photographs:

EMAIL: districtoffice@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:

July 2026 Issue = Deadline August 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!

The cover photograph for the District News Magazine will be selected based on clarity and the display of impactful service.



"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.