



NEWS

July 2026



Alexandria Kiwanis Invests in Early Learning One Classroom at a Time

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



22



29



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ON THE COVER: CLASSROOM NECESSITIES PROJECT

Alexandria Kiwanis Past President Patsy Shaw, Cherokee Elementary School Pre-K Teacher Donna Barbe, Alexandria Kiwanis Member Judge Greg Beard, and Cherokee Elementary School Principal Amber Spurgeon are pictured with vital classroom resources provided by the Alexandria Kiwanis Club.

See more on page 20.

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A Message from the Governor

By Marcel Lashover, Governor

Hello to all LaMissTenn Kiwanis Members,

Well, it's three-quarters of my Governor year, and it's flying by so fast.

I just got back from Manila at Kiwanis ICON week and met a lot of great Kiwanians from around the world. Also, I got to see all the projects they are doing to support the children of the world.

Well, now it's time for DCON 2026, which will be held July 31st to August 2nd in Kenner, LA, and it will be a fun Mardi Gras event. So, wear your Mardi Gras colors all weekend!

Don't forget that at the Governor's Party on Saturday, we will have a Costume Contest, a Mask Contest, and a 2nd Line Decorated Umbrella Contest. (Check out rules page 7) We will also be auctioning off the umbrellas, and the money raised will go to Metro Centers for Community Advocacy www.mccagno.org (if you want to know more about them, please click on the link.)

This year, we have opened 3 new clubs and have 1 more to complete our goal of 4 new clubs.

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.

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. Remember, if you "Don't ASK, you Don't GET"

If you need help, please reach out to any one of us. You can contact me by email or phone:

- lamisstengov2526@gmail.com
- (504) 272-1600

Thanks, hope you all are doing well, and hope to see you soon at DCON!

2025-2026 LaMissTenn Governor



DCON 2026

Kenner, LA

July 31 - August 2



See page 7



Building a Stronger Future through Service

By Andrew Dozier, Governor-Elect



First and foremost, to all of our Kiwanis members thank you for your continued support, service and dedication to your clubs and communities.

Every successful Kiwanis club is built on a foundation of dedicated members, meaningful service, and a shared commitment to improving the lives of children and communities.

While traditions provide stability, growth and vitality require intentional effort. Strengthening your club is not about doing more, it is about doing what matters most, together.

If we focus on member engagement, members who feel connected and valued are most likely to remain active and enthusiastic.

We must create opportunities for fellowship, recognize individual member and club accomplishments, and encourage participation in club decisions.

A welcoming environment where every member feels their contribution matters strengthens both relationships and retention.

Investing in leadership development develops future leaders. Encourage members to chair committees, lead projects and attend district and international training opportunities. Leadership growth not only benefits the individual but, also ensures the club remains vibrant and sustainable for years to come.

The heart of Kiwanis is service. Evaluate current projects regularly and ask whether they continue to meet community needs. Seek partnership with schools, nonprofits, businesses, and community organizations to maximize impact.

Meaningful service attracts members, inspires volunteers, and demonstrates the value of Kiwanis to the community.

Always embrace new ideas, while honoring club traditions and remain open to innovation. Consider new meeting formats, service opportunities, and communication methods. We must remember that today's members often seek flexibility and purpose. Adapting to changing needs helps clubs remain relevant and appealing to future generations.

The need for every member to prioritize membership is a must. We must be an ambassador for Kiwanis. Encourage members to invite friends, neighbors and colleagues to meetings and service projects. Share stories of impact through social media, local media, and community events. People join organizations when they see a mission that makes a difference.

Building a culture of belonging with a diversity of backgrounds, experiences and perspectives strengthens any organization. Make inclusion a priority and ensure new members are welcomed, mentored, and encouraged to participate. A club where everyone belongs is a club that thrives.

As Kiwanis members, we are more than volunteers - we are builders of stronger communities and brighter futures. When we strengthen our clubs, we strengthen ability to serve.

“The strength of a club is not measured by the number of members it has, but by the number of lives it touches.

BOOTS ON THE GROUND!

I Salute you!

Andrew Dozier

2025-2026 Governor-Elect



IF for LaMissTenn

By Claude Vinson, Immediate Past Governor

Hey, LaMissTenn family! It's been a "stone-cold-groove" of a ride; bringing you into my zany world thru articles and antics! So, for my last article in serving on the Executive Committee, I thought to end like I began, with a poem. Not just mimicking any ole poem, but a famous one that my father introduced to me as a kid and as other fathers around the world introduced to their sons offering their advice on how to become a virtuous, resilient, and mature person, emphasizing self-control, integrity, and perseverance through life's challenges, and the importance of keeping one's head and staying humble.

This could be said for a lot of the same challenges we as Kiwanians face in this uncertain world today: to find that "sweet spot" needed to be a successful, balanced, and an inclusive organization; exploring the bold and generational changes needed to attract the new "breed" of Kiwanians and embracing the ideas they present to help Kiwanis grow and thrive by trusting their leadership without doubt, consternation, and complaint.

Several poems like, "Be Strong", "The Man in the Glass", and others helped shaped my mind, heart, and soul, but my most favorite was "IF", by Rudyard Kipling.

So, this one is for my dad (and yes, you too, Mr. Kipling!)

IF you can lead, yet keep your ego small; speak strong, yet stay sincere,
And welcome different voices as a strength, and not as a test;
IF you can plan with courage, then adapt when needs are newly clear,
And share the credit gladly, giving others your very best;
IF you can welcome newcomers in, and learn their names with care,
And pokey fun but not too hokey and make a place for laughter, but for purpose even more;
IF you can turn a simple "We should help" to "Yes—we'll be there,"
And build a team that leaves no willing servant at the door;
IF you can meet your neighbors where they are, and listen first,
And see in every child a spark worth tending before it's quenched;
IF you can give your time when schedules strain and pockets thirst,
And serve with steady hands that do not need their praises drenched;
IF you can raise the funds and still remember why the work is done,
For scholarships opened wide, and brighter paths that start with care;
Not for the ribbon's shine, but for the meals and books that help someone,
And for the child who learns, at last, that hope is waiting there;
IF you can work with partners, schools, and cities—side by side,
And keep the mission focused when opinions disagree;
IF you can honor promises, do what is right when no one's eyed,
And make your meetings places where respect is plain to see;
IF you can mentor youth to lead and serve, then step a pace behind,
In K-Kids and Builders Club, where helping hands and hearts are grown;
IF you can cheer Terrific Kids/BUGS—and help their confidence unwind—
And stand with Aktion Club, so every neighbor feels at home;
IF you can leave a Community a little stronger than the way you found its days,
By lifting up young leaders, like Key-Club and Circle K, with the courage to speak,
serve, and to try;
IF you can turn their small pebbles of service into ripples—then quiet, steady waves—
—Till they step up to guide the good work done, long after we pass by;
IF you can keep the purpose in your heart through every passing year—
To serve the world's children in the ways your talents fit—
Through Kiwanis Kompanions, A.S.K. G.E.T. and Boots on The Ground,
Then, life worth living, will prove to be legit.
So, bring your hands, your heart, your voice, your vision, and your **Superhero** might;
Say "yes" to one more project, say "yes" to one more youth who needs a guide.
Continue to let service be our habit, and compassion be our light—
And join in, step up, lead on: with our Historic District by your side!
LaMissTenn, do all these things, then ours will be the raucous joy that brings all our communities near;
And in our **District**, we'll live what it means to be successful, bountiful and eternally revered!

Remembering the Best

By Laura Gilliland, Vice Governor



We have all had those who we look up to in our lives, and I have been blessed, as many of you have, to call Dennis Martin Oliver, Jr. my MENTOR and DEAR FRIEND. In my many Kiwanis endeavors, he was only a phone call away to cheer me on and wish me the best. I'll never forget when Dennis drove over two hours to sit next to me for support when I ran for District Trustee. He always had that gift of making those around him feel special and valued. We all loved Dennis, not only in the LaMissTenn Kiwanis District, but around the entire Kiwanis world.

Dennis was a member of the Gulfport Kiwanis Club for over 35 years. As a member of that club, he was recognized as a Distinguished President and a Distinguished Lt. Governor of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. During this time, he was chosen Kiwanian of the Year for leading Kiwanis' worldwide service project to supply iodized salt to Third World countries. He was active during this time at the District Level of Kiwanis, as he served as Chairman of many District committees. He was LaMissTenn Governor in 2006-2007, and he was recognized that year for the Number 1 Growth District in North America. In 2005, during the wrath of Katrina, Dennis and his wife Ame took over 75 volunteers in their home at different times.

In 2012, Dennis was elected to a three year term on the Kiwanis International Board, which consists of ten Trustees and four Officers. In this position, he served on two major committees and was counselor/advisor for Districts across the world. Dennis served on several boards over the years. One was at Lynn Meadows Discovery Center and de L'Epee Deaf Center where he operated the food bank every Thursday. The food bank honored Dennis by naming the bank The Dennis Oliver Food Pantry.

In 2010, Dennis was asked and accepted the position to lead the LaMissTenn District in Kiwanis' newest worldwide service project, Eliminate. This project was to rid the world of tetanus through fundraising 110 million dollars. This was a ten-year commitment.

In 2011, a very special recognition came to Dennis when the Corporation for National and Community Service presented Dennis with President Obama's Outstanding Volunteer Recognition. Dennis was appointed to the Kiwanis Children's Board and served one year. In 2025, Dennis was one of the five selected to the first LaMissTenn Kiwanis District's Hall of Fame.

I will always cherish the conversations with and words of wisdom from this fine Kiwanian. He was truly one in a million.

Having been president of a couple of Kiwanis Clubs and Inter-Civic Council of Greater Baton Rouge, I have come to realize the importance of recognizing members for achievements in their respective communities. One such member, Gerard Adam Ruth, recently passed on having been a Kiwanian for 67 years. He was a founding/charter member of the Kiwanis Club of Red Stick in 1959. As a matter of fact, he snagged Senator John F. Kennedy, when he was on the campaign trail for presidency, to be Red Stick's first guest speaker.

Gerard had one of the biggest hearts of any Kiwanian you have ever known. He had been in the furniture business for 70 years. When there was a fundraiser, such as a golf tournament, Gerard donated many items to raffle off. He provided a coveted framed Rodrigue print each year which one of the Kiwanis clubs raffled off as its main fundraiser. Whether it be a fundraiser or simply a social gathering, Gerard would not come empty handed.

Gerard was a lifelong resident of Baton Rouge. From 1950-1953, he served in the United States Coast Guard during the Korean War on the Coast Guard cutter Tampa. For exemplary service as the leading Seaman First Class, he received the National Defense Service Medal, the Louisiana Veterans Honor Medal, and a Citation for Sea Service.

Throughout his life, Gerard was deeply involved in his community. He was active and held Life Memberships in many organizations. Kiwanis awards Gerard received were: the Walter Zeller Fellowship Award and the Ralph L. W. Schmidt Divisions 8E/8W 2019 Outstanding Kiwanian Award presented by the Kiwanis Club of Louisiana State University.

It is said that he has humbly lived out his life's priorities: "God, Country, Family, and ALL Children."



Dennis Martin Oliver, Jr.



Gerard Adam Ruth



Mardi Gras

Mask Contest

Bring your best Mardi Gras flair - masks can be purchased or handmade and comfortable enough to wear safely.

Get ready to wow the crowd! Judges will be looking for creativity, color, sparkle, and lots of Mardi Gras spirit.

Don't miss your moment to shine - wear your mask to the Governor's Party and let the good times roll so the judges can make their final selection.

Mardi Gras

Costume Contest

Dress to dazzle! Bring the sparkle, the feathers, the flair, and all the fabulous Mardi Gras energy you can muster.

Give us your best strut! Each contestant gets a mement to pose, twirl, shimmy, or show off their look to the crowd.

Cheers choose the champion! The crowd decides the winner, so clap it up, shout it out, and let the loudest love take the crown!

Second Line

Umbrella Contest

Bring your brightest Mardi Gras spirit and join us with your decorative umbrella for a playful contest filled with color, creativity, feathers, beads, and plenty of festive fun. Whether you go bold, sparkly, silly, or elegant, everyone is welcome to show off their one-of-a-kind masterpiece.

Umbrellas will be auctioned with proceeds going to **Metro Centers for Community Advocacy**. Come join the fun and make a difference!

Laissez les bons temps rouler with Kiwanis!

For more information visit:

DCON WEBSITE

DICON 2026 SERVICE PROJECT

**BUILDING ACTIVITY KITS FOR THE
RONALD McDONALD HOUSE OF
SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA, NEW ORLEANS**

- Kits will include items to provide comfort and stress relief for families with children who are ill or injured.
- You can participate** by purchasing and bringing activity items or donating funds.
- Visit <https://k11.site.kiwanis.org/district-convention/> for the list of items or to donate.

RONALD McDONALD
HOUSE CHARITIES®

TOGETHER, LET'S MAKE AN IMPACT
AND BRIGHTEN LIVES!

SERVE • SUPPORT • INSPIRE

Let's Make an Impact!

*By Cathy Simmons,
2026 DCON Service Project Chair*

I am proud to serve as your 2026 DCON Service Project chair! The project chosen for this DCON benefits the local Ronald McDonald House, and is in 2 parts to allow as many attendees to participate, as possible.

On Saturday morning til lunch, there will be an “Inspiration” table where you can take a break from the day’s activities to write a note, decorate a card, draw fun pictures ... whatever you wish, to send thoughtful words of encouragement to the families staying in Ronald McDonald House, as their children receive medical services.

Part 2 will be filling 100+ Activity Kits for the families of Ronald McDonald House, that will be distributed as they enter the house, when smiles are hard to come by! We will be packing these kits after the Fellowship Luncheon, on Saturday, about 2pm.

So far, we have 50% of the clubs in the district registered. Woo Hoo! That’s awesome! May I ask a favor??? If your club can’t make the district convention, would you consider donating to this project? Visit the [DCON website](#) for the chance to donate funds ahead of time, so my committee can purchase from this list for you!

Many thx!



Scan here
for the list of items
or to donate

Mid-Year Education Conference



Save THE Date

March 20, 2027 ✦ Baton Rouge, LA



Carnival Dream Cruise to Cozumel



DCON

July 29 - August 2, 2027

Get your
LaMissTenn
Kiwanis
Merchandise
HERE:



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*



Congratulations to the
2024-2025 Jay R. Broussard
Memorial Outstanding Club
Secretary, Linda Leger



Division 4A Lieutenant Governor Nicholas Koepf presents Algiers Kiwanis Club Secretary Linda Leger with the 2024-2025 District Secretary Award.

2025-2026 DISTINGUISHED PROGRAMS

Awards

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

CRITERIA & NOMINATIONS:

www.LaMissTenn.org



Membership Starts with the Experience

By John Fry, District Membership Chair

Why did you join Kiwanis?

For most of us, it wasn't because of a meeting agenda, a committee assignment, or even a service project. We joined because someone invited us, welcomed us, and helped us feel that we belonged. We stayed because we found purpose, friendships, and opportunities to make a difference.

As we focus on membership growth across our district, perhaps the most important question isn't, "How many members did we add?" Instead, it may be, "What kind of experience are we creating for the members we already have?"

Take a moment to think about your own club.

- If you were attending your first meeting this month, how would you feel?
- Would someone greet you at the door and introduce you to others?
- Would you leave knowing how to get involved?
- Would you see meaningful opportunities to serve?
- Would you feel like your ideas and talents matter?

Now consider the newest members in your club. Are they finding ways to connect beyond attending meetings? Are they building relationships? Are they discovering the impact Kiwanis has on children and communities? Most importantly, are they experiencing the joy of service that inspired each of us to join?



Membership is not simply about recruitment. Recruitment gets someone in the door. The membership experience is what encourages them to stay, grow, and eventually invite others.

Strong clubs intentionally create opportunities for members to engage. They offer meaningful service projects, leadership opportunities, social connections, and ways for members to use their unique skills and interests. They help members understand not only what the club does, but why it matters.

As your club plans activities in the coming months, consider asking these questions:

- Does every member have a place to contribute?
- Are we creating opportunities for fellowship as well as service?
- Do new members understand our mission and impact?
- Are we helping members build connections that keep them engaged?
- Would we enthusiastically recommend our club experience to a friend?

When members feel welcomed, valued, and connected, growth often follows naturally.

This conversation about membership and engagement will continue at our upcoming **Louisiana-Mississippi-West Tennessee District Convention**, taking place **July 31 through August 2 in Kenner, Louisiana**. The District Convention is an excellent opportunity to connect with fellow Kiwanians, exchange ideas, celebrate successes, and discover new ways to strengthen the member experience in your club.

Whether you're a longtime member, a club officer, or someone who joined recently, the District Convention offers something valuable for everyone. The friendships formed, ideas shared, and inspiration gained often become the foundation for stronger clubs and stronger communities.

As you read this newsletter and reflect on your own Kiwanis journey, consider one final question: **If someone joined your club tomorrow, what would convince them to stay?**

The answer may be the key to building the future of Kiwanis - one member experience at a time.

Together, we can ensure that every member finds a place to serve, a place to connect, and a place to belong.

Yours in Service,

John

John A. Fry
DMC

WELCOME TO THE KIWANIS FAMILY!

Reflects new membership from 3/27/26 to 6/23/26

David Abbott, <i>Alexandria</i>	Michael Glaser, <i>Dawn Busters</i>	Charmaine Raimando, <i>St. Bernard-Arabi</i>
Charles Atkins, <i>Greenville</i>	Ashley Griffith, <i>Dawn Busters</i>	Renee Rainey, <i>Memphis</i>
Allen Barton, <i>Paris-Lakeway</i>	Tanya Haase, <i>Cortana</i>	Alice Ramos, <i>Plaquemines</i>
Jazmin Bass, <i>Vicksburg</i>	Wanda Hammac, <i>Ponchatoula</i>	Dalia Robles, <i>Plaquemines</i>
Elizabeth Baudoin, <i>Walker</i>	LeeAnn Harlton, <i>St. Bernard-Arabi</i>	Beth Rock, <i>Amory</i>
Tyler Berry, <i>Pine Belt</i>	Tracy Hugentroth, <i>Cortana</i>	Nettie Russell, <i>Ruston</i>
Tonia Bishop, <i>Gulfport</i>	Michelle Hutson, <i>Walker</i>	Russhell Sanchez-Alvarez, <i>Biloxi</i>
Jerry Bologna, <i>Dawn Busters</i>	William Ivey, <i>Union City</i>	Luke Scott, <i>New Iberia</i>
Daniel Bostic, <i>St. Bernard-Arabi</i>	James Johnson, <i>Greenville</i>	Emily Starr, <i>Dawn Busters</i>
Thomas Bowman, <i>Ruston</i>	Scooter Keen, <i>Denham Springs</i>	Vashantonia Thomas, <i>Opelousas</i>
Simone Boyd, <i>Bluff City</i>	Huey Kern, <i>New Iberia</i>	Kole Trichell, <i>Vicksburg</i>
Valerie Brolin, <i>Dawn Busters</i>	William Kingsmill, <i>NW St. Tammany</i>	Jason Traux, <i>Cortana</i>
Hailey Camp, <i>Twin Cities</i>	Nikki Klopfenstein, <i>Paris-Lakeway</i>	Angel Vedovatti, <i>Lafayette</i>
Carla Carollo, <i>St. Bernard-Arabi</i>	Kobi Lombes, <i>East St. Mary</i>	JoAnn Washington Cooper, <i>Moisant</i>
Anna Cavalier, <i>New Iberia</i>	Olivia Lombes, <i>East St. Mary</i>	Denise Wilson, <i>Bluff City</i>
Bernie Clement, <i>Houma</i>	Krystal Maddox, <i>Gulfport</i>	John Wynn, <i>Natchitoches</i>
Trevor Collings, <i>Greater Covington</i>	Jessica Mathis, <i>Paris-Lakeway</i>	Lisa Young, <i>St. Bernard-Arabi</i>
James Copeland, <i>Moisant</i>	Amber Medlin, <i>Lafayette</i>	
Jamie Cormier, <i>Opelousas</i>	Jacques Metoyer, <i>Alexandria</i>	
Chad Cox, <i>Paris-Lakeway</i>	Gregory Mullen, <i>New Iberia</i>	
Joey Danos, <i>New Iberia</i>	Angela Paz, <i>Algiers</i>	
Nicholas Evans, <i>Greenville</i>	Raul Paz, <i>Algiers</i>	
Becky Faulkner, <i>Corinth</i>	Renii Price, <i>Bluff City</i>	
George Felt, <i>St. Bernard-Arabi</i>	Liliana Pyron, <i>Biloxi</i>	





Kiwanis is serious about youth protection. That's why we have created a toll-free, confidential helpline that can be used 24 hours a day by Kiwanis family members and the youth we serve. To access the U.S. helpline, call:

866-607-SAFE (7233)

[KidsNeedKiwanis](#)

**Shop Kiwanis
HERE:**



SAVE THE DATE
JUNE 16-19, 2027

★

START PLANNING NOW!

Kiwanis
CONVENTION 2027
DALLAS

Join us in Dallas, Texas, U.S., at the iconic Hilton Anatole for an unforgettable convention experience filled with learning, networking and Kiwanis pride.



A portion of Kiwanis-branded merchandise sales is returned to Kiwanis International. Every purchase from ShopKiwanis.com and the Kiwanis Family Store contribute to allowing Kiwanis members to improve their communities and the lives of children around the world.



Get Ready for Some Foundation Fun at DCON 2026!

Friends of the Foundation Reception

A reception for **Friends of the Foundation** will be held at District Convention on Friday, 7/31 at 4pm for current Friends. Confirm if you are a current Friend or sign up as a Friend [HERE!](#)



River of Life Raffle

Enter to win a framed River of Life valued at \$750!
Winner to be drawn Saturday during the House of Delegates.
Must be present to win.



Gift Basket Raffle



The District Foundation will host a Gift Basket Raffle at the District Convention. Make sure your Club is represented with a donated gift basket and get your tickets for your chance to take home one of these wonderful baskets!

Foundation Awards Key Cub Scholarships

Charles & Sharon Ford Key Club Scholarship (\$3,500)



Viet Duong
New Iberia Senior High School
New Iberia, LA

Jean Benoit, Jerry Hafter, & Anthony Simmons Key Club Scholarships (\$2,000)



Jolie Derks
Ponchatoula High School
Ponchatoula, LA



Sarah Fitzgerald
Pineville High School
Pineville, LA



Samirah Jasmine
Kenner Discovery
Kenner, LA

District Foundation Key Club Scholarships (\$1,000)



Blair Burd
Kenner Discovery
Kenner, LA



Gracie Graham
Northshore High School
Slidell, LA



Magnolia Bell McLean
Warren Central High School
Vicksburg, MS



Jaden Newman
Kenner Discovery
Kenner, LA



Amaiya Penn
Munford High School
Munford, TN



JC Strickland
River City Early College High School
Vicksburg, MS



West Tennessee Key Leader

By Linda Ramsey, Key Leader North District Administrator



Kiwaniis Key Leader was held on April 24-26, 2026, at Lakeshore Camp and Retreat in Eva, Tennessee. We had a total of 63 participants, 48 students and 15 chaperones. Brian Ritchie was our Lead Facilitator, who came to us from Ohio. Brian did an outstanding job leading our participants in the new Key Leader Curriculum. The new book is updated with new and current information. We have new concepts that we are striving to enhance for the students.

Our first curriculum had an original set of competencies that were... Integrity, Personal Growth, Respect, Communication, & Excellence.

The updated competencies are... Leadership, Growth, Mindset, Global Citizenship, Meaningful Connection, & Effective Communication.

Leadership replaces Integrity. In the updated curriculum Robert K. Greenleaf's principles of servant leadership remain a part of the curriculum. They've added some ideas of Simon Sinek. They continue to emphasize the importance of integrity by examining the alignment between one's values, behaviors and purpose, all within the context of leadership identity.

Growth Mindset replaces Personal Growth and Excellence. It introduces 21st century skills such as emotional intelligence, resilience, and perseverance. The students are challenged—physically, emotionally and interpersonally—through activities like the ropes course, collaborative tasks and facilitated discussions.

Meaningful Connection replaces Respect. This competency invites students to understand respect as something that is built through relationships, not demanded through titles. They participate in listening activities and learn how to support one another and practice vulnerability.

Continued on page 17



KEY LEADER®

Save the Dates!



Key Leader South
November 13-15, 2026
Camp Istrouma
Greenwell Springs, LA

West Tennessee Key Leader
April 23-25, 2027
Camp Lakeshore
Eva, TN



A weekend retreat for high school & graduating 8th grade students that empowers them to become more caring & confident leaders

Aspire to Inspire: DA LINGO

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



"TYKYK" ... If you know, you know.... and if you don't, tough luck. We all use lingo extensively. Here is a dictionary definition of the word.... "Lingo is a way of speaking that's shared by a particular group of people - it's their own personal slang or jargon."

Like it or not we live in a world of "lingo." When you get in your automatic transmission car or truck, you understand that PRNDL means park, reverse, neutral, drive, low. Then to drive you must understand MPH, HWY, DMV, etc. If you watch baseball, you must learn the meanings of RHP, BA, ERA, HR, K and a myriad of other lingo abbreviations. Other sports have their own lingo. How about "forty love" and "add out" in tennis? The various professions have lingo abbreviations for a jungle of things and don't even get started on the complexity of medical lingo. (SOB is not a description of an unpleasant person.)

These days the pharmaceutical industry TV ads are rife with letter abbreviations for various diseases they hope you can convince your doctor to attack with prescriptions for their miracle products. Some of these lingo abbreviations are so mysterious that you have no idea what disease they are describing.

Well, Kiwanis has a unique set of lingo words and abbreviations as well. Imagine the confusion and feelings of being an outsider that a new member feels when seasoned Kiwanians rattle off terms like ICON, DCON, SLP, CLE, MWC, CKI, BUG, KCF, LMT, YCP and many more. [Give yourself ten points for each of these ten you know and see how you score.]

If we truly expect to welcome new members into Kiwanis, it behooves us to use full names for everything and let the newbie member absorb the lingo over time. An effective orientation for new members should explain fully all our Kiwanis programs by name, purpose and practice and only then glibly use the lingo we often take for granted among our veteran K-selves.

So, faithfully yours in Kiwanis, here is a brain-teaser Kiwanis lingo term for you:

KIAGOOVDTITWOCACOAT.

West Tennessee Key Leader Continued . . .

Effective Communication expands Communication. Students are taught how their words and actions are interpreted by others, even if their intentions were positive. They are working on building emotional intelligence, empathy and conflict resolution skills.

Global Citizen is a new concept. This encourages students to think not only about their communities, but also about their place in the world. How can you use your skills, voice and values to make the world a better place.

We still do a lot of the same activities, but the information is more up to date with today's times and some different viewpoints. We still do the Key Leader grams, have mailboxes, have a bonfire, neighborhoods, etc.

All of the chaperones, myself included, were impressed with the new curriculum. I did ask them to write down a personal evaluation that I could share with Kiwanis International, because the curriculum is still a work in progress and changes are still being made. I have more information available on the new curriculum, and I will have some of the new curriculum guides available at the District Convention.





the POSSIBILITY PROJECT



Kiwanis
CHILDREN'S FUND

FINISH STRONG!

By Lenny Simmons, Kiwanis Children's Fund District Chair

It's hard to believe that there are only three more months left in our Kiwanis 2025-2026 Administrative year. As of June 2026, The Kiwanis Children's Fund has collected in cash and pledges \$10,780,138 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 \$284,217 in cash and pledges. It takes \$2.25 to take care of the needs of one child. So far, our clubs have helped 126,319 children! These funds will be used for grants to our Kiwanis Clubs locally and world-wide to provide needed services for our children.

Speaking of grants, two Kiwanis Club in our District were awarded Community Grants this year:

- **The St. Bernard-Arabi Kiwanis Club** received a grant of \$10,652 for their "Ready for Reading" project. This grant addresses low early literacy rates and limited access to books. 2,250 children will be impacted with this grant.
- **The Central Kiwanis Club** received a grant of \$2,000 for their "Sensory Toy Drive" project. The grant helps children with autism, ADHD and other sensory processing challenges. 300 children will be impacted with this grant.

Congratulations to both Clubs!

In my last article I wrote about our **Microgrant** program. 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 \$250-1,000!

This program has been extended to August 1st or until the funds are depleted. So, if your Club is looking to do another service during the summer, the Children's Fund may be able to assist you with funding. For more information, please contact Kiwanis at grants@kiwanis.org or call 1-800-KIWANIS and ask for the Kiwanis Children's Fund.

I hope to see many of you at our District Convention in Kenner, LA later this month. Stop by my Children's Funds table and grab a treat or two. I will be happy to talk to you about the Possibility Project, our grant programs, your club becoming an Impact Club, and how you can become a member of our Cornerstone Society.

It's still not too late 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 to present to one of your members.

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!

Let's Finish Strong, Kiwanians!

Turning the *Impossible* into IT'S POSSIBLE!

By Cathy Simmons, Kiwanis Children's Fund Trustee 2024-2027



A dream launched quietly in Oct 2022, to major donors of the Kiwanis Children's Fund, in hopes of raising funds and planting the seeds, to kick off a new fundraising campaign, wherein funds raised would be allocated for grants for the thousands of Kiwanis Clubs worldwide. The dream? To raise \$25 million to help 10 million children, in five years.

The Possibility Project launched to members during the 2023 International Convention, in Minneapolis. We are 1/2 way through the campaign, having raised \$10,780,138 in cash and pledges. Thank YOU!

When Kiwanis club members serve kids, they support the 3 Kiwanis causes:

- health and nutrition, education and literacy, and youth leadership development

Thanks to those causes, members make an impact that lasts — from infancy to early adulthood.

During this 2025-2026 Kiwanis year, here is the impact YOU have made POSSIBLE (and we've got 3 more months to go):

- Community grants (both funding cycles): 40 grants awarded (totaling ~ \$330,000) and impacting over 95,000 children! (NOTE: 2 of these grants went to clubs right here, in LaMissTenn!)
- Microgrants \$250-\$1000: (small clubs under 35 members): 31 awarded (~\$27,000)
- Kickstarter grants (new clubs) 4 awarded @ \$1000 each (\$4,000)
- Pediatric Medicine grants: 7 awarded for ~\$42,000
- District grants (5% club giving goes back to the districts): 28 districts applied (~\$87,000)
- Scholarships to Key Club & Circle-K: 8 awarded for ~ \$18,000

Together, Kiwanis Clubs and the Kiwanis Children's Fund are turning the impossible into the POSSIBLE!

With MUCH gratitude to you and your clubs for supporting The Possibility Project, I remain

Yours in Service,

Cathy Simmons,
Kiwanis Children's Fund
Trustee 2024-2027

Stay up to date online.
And encourage members
to do the same.



kiwanischildrensfund.org

You're part of a global network - nearly 180,000 Kiwanis club members in 85 nations. Imagine the possibilities if we all come together to make a difference. That's what the Possibility Project is all about. **It's the first fundraising campaign that solely supports Kiwanis clubs and the children we serve.** Kids need our help - every day, all around the world. Let's answer the call.

10
MILLION KIDS

us\$25 MILLION

5 YEARS

Alexandria Kiwanis Club’s Classroom Necessities Project: Investing in Early Learning One Classroom at a Time

By Judge Greg Beard, LaMissTenn Leadership Development Coordinator, Alexandria Kiwanis Club

The Kiwanis Club of Alexandria continues its longstanding commitment to improving the lives of children through its Classroom Necessities Project, an initiative designed to ensure that young learners have access to the essential tools they need to thrive in school. Through the support of its members, community partners, and the District’s Foundation, the club provided vital classroom resources to Pre-K and Kindergarten students and teachers at Alma Redwine Elementary, Martin Park Elementary, and Cherokee Elementary Schools. The initiative directly impacts over 100 students, helping ensure that classrooms are equipped with the materials necessary for effective teaching and learning. The Classroom Necessities Project provides classrooms with a wide variety of educational supplies and hands-on learning materials. Through a \$5,000 community service grant from the District Foundation, the Club pooled its project funds to supply teachers with resources totaling over \$6,600 that support interactive learning, creativity, and skill development during the critical early years of education. Many elementary classrooms begin the school year without the basic essentials needed to support daily instruction. When supplies are unavailable, teachers often purchase materials themselves, creating an additional financial burden while attempting to meet the needs of every student.

The Classroom Necessities Project addresses this challenge by removing barriers that can limit a child's ability to engage, explore, and succeed. By ensuring that classrooms have the same foundational tools, the project promotes a more equitable learning environment where all students have access to the resources they need. The impact extends beyond students. Providing classroom

essentials allows teachers to focus more fully on instruction rather than filling supply gaps, creating a more consistent, supportive, and encouraging educational experience for everyone involved. As Rapides Parish Superintendent Jeff Powell noted in a letter to the club: "The Kiwanis Club of Alexandria is making sure that these classrooms have the necessary items for an effective teaching environment. This is a proven return on investing in early childhood by ensuring children have the necessary tools for teachers to perform their duties." The club's commitment to children's education has been demonstrated through numerous service projects over the years, including previous efforts that provided coats and jackets to students in need. For this initiative, Kiwanis members worked closely with school administrators and teachers to identify classroom needs and purchase age-appropriate learning tools that would have the greatest educational impact. The result is a collection of resources that will be used daily to enhance instruction and student engagement.

The project also reflects the club's philosophy that supporting children means supporting the entire educational community—students, teachers, schools, and families alike. As Kiwanis Club leaders have emphasized, the project helps ease the financial strain on teachers who often feel compelled to purchase supplies out of their own pockets so no child goes without. The Classroom Necessities Project represents more than a donation of supplies—it is an investment in the future of Alexandria's children. By providing the tools needed for quality early childhood education, the Kiwanis Club of Alexandria is helping create opportunities for academic success while demonstrating the power of community partnership. By partnering with local schools and educators, the Kiwanis Club of Alexandria is helping to build stronger classrooms, support teachers, and create greater opportunities for student success. Through projects like these, the Club continues to demonstrate that investing in children today creates a brighter future for the entire community.



Alexandria Kiwanis Past President Patsy Shaw, Cherokee Elementary School Pre-K Teacher Donna Barbe, Alexandria Kiwanis Member Judge Greg Beard, & Cherokee Elementary School Principal Amber Spurgeon

Algiers Kiwanis: Operation Thanks a Million

By Linda Leger, Algiers Kiwanis Club

On April 17, the **Algiers Kiwanis Club** in conjunction with the Woldenberg Village residents participated in project "Operation Thanks A Million."

Kiwanian, Cindy Johnson is heading up this project which consists of writing cards, letters and making bookmarks which will be sent to troops out of the country with the help of a Military base in Alabama.

Our pledge is to complete 2,275; over 1,000 have been completed at this time. **Algiers** and **Kenner North Kiwanis Clubs**, Woldenberg Village residents, Bonnabel High School, John Curtis High School, and Kenner Discovery Academy have had gatherings to write letters. Also, at the Key Club 2026 DCON Convention in Natchez a session was held to introduce the project, and many cards were completed.



Edna Karr High School Key Club members make cards and write letters for Operation Thanks a Million at the LaMissTenn Key Club Convention in Natchez, MS in April.



Residents of Woldenberg Village participate in Operation Thanks a Million.



Algiers Kiwanis Club members David Bailey, a friend of Algiers



and Bobbie Whiddon write cards. Bobbie Whiddon, a friend of Algiers Kiwanis, helps out.

Ascension Kiwanis: Bikes for BUGs

By Tiffany LaPorte & Donna Leggett, Ascension Kiwanis Club

The Ascension Kiwanis Club celebrated and recognized forty-eight third grade students from Bluff Ridge Primary School at an end of the school year BUGs (Bring Up Grades) party in May. Ten lucky students won bicycles and eight were able to meet at the Prairieville Wal-Mart the following Saturday with their parents to pick out their new bicycles - just in time for the summer! Nine Ascension Kiwanis members and two guests were on hand to see the big smiles as the students chose their new bikes. The celebration continued at Wal-Mart the following week for the two remaining BUGs students who weren't able to meet the weekend before.

This project was made possible by the amazing sponsors of the Ascension Kiwanis Club's Annual Bowling Tournament and through a grant from the LaMissTenn District Foundation. Other prizes awarded to the students during the BUGs party included goody bags filled with prizes, a Starbucks tumbler and a certificate from Raising Cane's for a free kids meal. During the BUGs party, the students were also treated to ice cream and a photo booth. This is certainly what Kiwanis is all about - serving the children of the world!



Kiwanis
Bring Up
Grades



Cortana Cares for the Community!

By Wanda Magee, Cortana Kiwanis Club

JAMBALAYA COOKS

In February, **Cortana Kiwanis** members prepared 250 jambalaya meals for a fundraiser to help Geo Next Generation High School band members attend a music competition at Six Flags in Georgia. Under the direction of Band Director Doretha Williams, the band took home 4 first place awards and a one second place.

Cortana Kiwanis came through again with another day of fundraising for the Epilepsy Alliance "Warrior Walk and 5K" held at Pennington Biomedical Center Saturday, April 18. Cortana Kiwanis team cooks started at 7 AM and by 9 AM the serving team had 230 clam shells ready for the participants and guests. The jambalaya was delicious and many at the event said Cortana's was the best of the 3 teams cooking jambalaya that day. Marc Pater thanks all of the team for getting things ready and coming out early to help EAL's cause. Marc's Granddaughter Haven (now 7) fights the battle of Epilepsy.

For several years, Cortana Kiwanis has donated jambalaya for sale at the Annual Open Car Show sponsored by BR Corvette Club. On Saturday, April 25, Cortana members traveled to Plaquemine, LA and cooked and served approximately 400 clam shell containers of jambalaya.

With one of the best attendances ever, all proceeds benefited St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. The total amount raised for St. Jude by the BR Corvette Club is approaching \$1.4 million over the years.



WHOLE HEART HEALTH

Cortana Kiwanis presented a \$500 check to Whitney Andrus with Whole Heart Health to support families facing food insecurity. Several members stayed after a meeting in May to assemble 67 mana bags with ingredients for Taco Soup and Chicken Pot Pie.



BRINGING UP GRADES

Cortana Kiwanis sponsors a Bring Up Grades (BUG) program at Broadmoor Elementary. Seventy-five students in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades who brought up their grades were rewarded with an end of the year party, enjoyed cookies, juice and a photo booth with props and presented with a BUG Honor Roll certificate. The names of six lucky students were drawn to win a bicycle, helmet and lock.

Cortana Kiwanis is proud to work with the faculty, staff, and the Little Bucs at Broadmoor Elementary!
[#KidsNeedKiwanis](#)



Dyersburg Kiwanis: Service in Kiwanis Park

By Sandy Tarkington, Dyersburg Kiwanis Club

KIWANIS PARK CLEAN-UP

The Kiwanis Club of Dyersburg held its local Kiwanis One Day at Kiwanis Park on April 25, 2026. A morning of clean-up of Kiwanis Park was held in preparation for Burgers in the Park, which would take place the following month. As a joint community effort, Dyersburg Lions Club members joined Kiwanians to help make a bigger impact.

The Kiwanis Park sign was cleaned to keep our brand well represented, and the playground equipment was pressure washed. The Free Little Library display was also cleaned and fully restocked with lots of new books. Shrubbery was trimmed, and of course, trash and limbs were picked up across the park.

As an expression of thanks, donuts were delivered to our Parks & Recreation team for maintaining the park throughout the year.



Cleaning the sign



Burger cooks



Burger packing crew

BURGERS IN THE PARK

Kiwanis Club of Dyersburg hosted its fourth annual Burgers in the Park event, bringing together community members for a day of fun, food, and fellowship. Held at Kiwanis Park in Dyersburg, the annual event attracts families, friends, and businesses to enjoy lunch for a good cause. Members grilled, packed lunch bags, fulfilled preorders & walk-up orders, and provided delivery to local businesses to make the event a success.

The Burgers in the Park event raised essential funds for continued enhancements to Kiwanis Park. President Matt Capps stated, “These funds will directly support initiatives to improve the quality of the park that bears our name.”

With limited parking currently available at the park, the club’s next proposed improvement to the park is the addition of a bridge to provide safe access to extra parking.



Stocking the little library

Germantown Kiwanis Club Invests in Literacy

By Linda Fisher, Germantown Kiwanis Club

This spring, the **Kiwanis Club of Germantown** continued its commitment to literacy and student success by providing support throughout the Germantown Municipal School District.

The club donated \$500 to the library of each school that sponsors a K-Kids, Builder's Club, Terrific Kids, or Key Club. Both the school district and Kiwanis share a dedication to literacy and student leadership. Through this partnership, schools are able to expand access to books and encourage a love of reading among students.

The donations were used in a variety of ways, from purchasing books for Read Across America Week to stocking books in book vending machines with exciting new titles. The Kiwanis Club of Germantown is proud to invest in the future of our students.



Laurel Kiwanis Presents Scholarships

By Rhonda Gilbert, Laurel Kiwanis Club

The **Laurel Kiwanis Club** recently held our annual Scholarship Luncheon and presented \$500 college scholarships to deserving high school seniors. The scholarships are funded by proceeds from the club's iconic Pancake Day held the first Saturday in December each year. In addition to the eighteen college scholarships presented by the Kiwanis Club, the family of Ryan Griffin presented a memorial scholarship in honor of his service as a Laurel Kiwanian.



Scholarship recipients front row left to right: West Jones HS - Aleyah Walker, Haley Overstreet, Kimberly Elias, Natalie Welborn; Laurel Christian HS - Gabriela McCord, Raygan Gable, Kennedy Black. Back row left to right: South Jones HS - Payne McDonald, Annie Byrd, Madison Porter; Classical Conversations Homeschool - Trey Brown, Ethan Brown; Northeast Jones HS - Lavondo Singleton, Max Walley, Sophie Ingram; Laurel HS - Nijelin Nichols, Sydney Ridgeway.

Greenville Kiwanis: Serving Our Youth and Senior Community

By Angela Crooms, Greenville Kiwanis Club

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

The Scholarship Committee’s selection process is based on a detailed evaluation of academic performance, leadership, and community involvement.

The scholarships were presented during our Annual Scholarship Luncheon held on Tuesday, May 19, 2026, at noon at the Greenville Golf & Country Club. We were especially honored to have our very own, Dr. Andrew Abide, share an inspirational message with the graduating seniors and their parents.

In addition to supporting education, the Kiwanis Club of Greenville remains committed to serving citizens of all ages in our community. On Friday, May 29, 2026, the club partnered with WWISCAA for the Wisdom & Wellness Expo for Senior Citizens, held from 10am to 2pm at the Washington County Convention Center, located at 1040 S. Raceway Road in Greenville, Mississippi.

The event celebrated Older Americans Month and featured activities and resources designed to support the physical, mental, and social well-being of older adults throughout the community.



Pictured at the Annual Scholarship Luncheon from left to right are: Denaria Carter, Kennedi Shead, Dr. Andrew Abide, Aubrey Thomas III, Brianna Hearn and Jionni Thomas.



Greenville Kiwanis Club members volunteer at the Wisdom & Wellness Expo for senior citizens celebrating Older Americans Month.

Memphis Kiwanis & Key Clubs Partner to Fight Hunger

By Melanie Blakeney, Memphis Kiwanis Club



The Memphis Kiwanis Club, led by President Walker Bradshaw, recently presented a contribution supporting 500 backpacks to Tasha McCraven, Child Nutrition Manager at the Mid-South Food Bank. Joining them was Melany Mauricio-Bustamante, President of the **White Station High School Key Club**.

Working together, the clubs packed 500 backpacks for children facing food insecurity. The backpacks provide approximately 3,000 meals and 1,000 snacks, helping ensure that children in our community have access to nutritious food when they need it most.

This collaborative effort demonstrates the commitment of both organizations to serving local families and making a meaningful difference in the lives of children throughout the Mid-South.

Housing insecurity is a real issue in most cities. **The Kiwanis Club of New Orleans** began making hygiene kits several years ago to assist various organizations that reach out to those in need. At the beginning of this Kiwanis year, the club purchased supplies to fill 150 kits. Club President, Debi Ryan, is encouraging us to pack 25 to 50 kits after club meetings, as a “mini” project, that takes only 15 minutes, but goes such a long way! Club members have just completed our 3rd mini project and filled 75 kits! This is definitely a great ongoing project for our community.

New Orleans Kiwanis Provides Hygiene Kits

By Cathy Simmons, New Orleans Kiwanis Club



Opelousas Kiwanis: Making a Difference!

By Carrie Richard, Opelousas Kiwanis Club

LOVE THE BOOT

Love the Boot Week was kicked off by the **Opelousas Kiwanis Club** through participation in the 5th Annual Opelousas Love Fest, held on April 18, 2026, at North City Park. Local businesses came together to set up tents and provide free items, along with complimentary food from various vendors, including red beans and rice, BBQ chicken, and fried fish. It was a beautiful sunny day with various bands playing music. Kiwanians were present, supporting and representing their respective businesses.

Love the Boot is a community-driven effort aimed at bringing peace and love back into our city. It was hosted by the Rotary Club, and the Opelousas Kiwanis Club proudly provides annual financial support for this meaningful cause.

On April 22, 2026, the Opelousas Kiwanis Club continued its efforts by updating one of its Kiwanis signs at Iggee Castille State Farm Insurance office. Mr. Castille was a valued member and Past President of the Opelousas Kiwanis Club.

The club also donated two benches to Opelousas South City Park, a location that has been instrumental in hosting the club’s Annual Softball Tournament, Cook-Off, Car Show, and Bingo events.

COOK-OFF, CARS, & BINGO!

This year brought both excitement and challenges as we prepared for our 6th Annual Softball Tournament & Community Bingo, 3rd Annual Anything Over Rice Cook-Off, and the addition of our 1st Annual Car Show. Due to rain, we were forced to reschedule our softball tournament for May 30th. However, the remaining events were successfully held on May 3rd.

We had 10 entries registered for the cook-off, with 7 teams showing up ready to compete. The competition was deliciously tough! The winners are: 3rd Place: John Wagley – pork in gravy; 2nd Place: 2 B’s and a Pot – sausage in red gravy; 1st Place: Steven Ortego – deer in gravy; and People’s Choice: Sausage in red gravy.

Our 1st Annual Car Show was a great success. With a \$30 entry fee per vehicle, we welcomed 26 impressive hot rods. The theme, “Krus’in for Kiwanis Kids,” set the tone for a fun and lively event.

Awards included Top 20 License Plates, Best Engine, Best Paint, Best Interior, and two Best in Show honors. The day was filled with great food, laughter, beautiful vehicles, and strong camaraderie as we continued doing what we love—raising funds to support children in our community.

Our 50/50 raffle alone raised \$652, which was split between the winner and the club. We are so grateful to our sponsors who supported us.

Our 6th Annual Community Bingo brought joy to both adults and children, offering free participation for everyone. Thanks to donations from Kiwanians and sponsors, we provided exciting prizes for all to enjoy.

We had 43 participants, and the smiles throughout the event made it truly worthwhile. We managed to raise \$1,690.15 in proceeds to help our children in our community despite the weather.

It turned out to be a wonderful day and we’re looking forward to hosting our softball tournament soon!



Ponchatoula Kiwanis Promotes Reading

By Pete Clark, Ponchatoula Kiwanis Club

Ponchatoula Kiwanis had the pleasure of giving a book to every second grader at Tucker Elementary School. This is one of our favorite projects to promote reading throughout our community and during summer months. As a partner with the Tangipahoa Parish School System Literacy Program, we are honored to participate. The children are always excited to be able to choose their own book to keep. With the help of grants from *Reading is Fundamental* and community support, we have continued this project for years providing books to over 1,000 students. We provide all types of different books of interest so the students can have a wide variety of choices. Our members love meeting the teachers and talking with the students about how important reading is.



St. Bernard-Arabi Kiwanis: Reading Around the World

By Mike Pechon, St. Bernard-Arabi Kiwanis Club

The Reading Incentive Program is an idea under the umbrella of the Ready for Reading Program of the **St. Bernard-Arabi Kiwanis Club**. The current iteration of the program started 3 years ago with the belief that we could incentivize students to increase their reading scores with various rewards. These included class pizza parties, Kindle Fires, field trips, books, and even bicycles for the very top readers.

The success of the program has been dramatic. We started with two elementary schools, Arabi and Chalmette Elementary. Growth, year over year, was over 100% at both schools. Teachers bought into the program and students did as well. In the second year we added a third school, Smith Elementary, and they too had over 100% growth in their first year. The two schools had continued growth. Not as dramatic but growth year over year as well. This is the third year of the program, and we are adding a fourth school.



Tupelo Kiwanis Gives Back

By Melonie Kight, Tupelo Kiwanis Club

TUPELO DRAWDOWN

The Kiwanis Club of Tupelo is proud to announce that our 2026 Drawdown Fundraiser was a tremendous success, raising more than \$34,000 after expenses to support our community initiatives and service projects.

This year's event featured a unique and exciting finish, as the final two remaining participants agreed at the last minute to split the grand prize, with each winner taking home \$5,000. CONGRATS EMILY & WILLIAM!

We were also thrilled to welcome our largest attendance ever, surpassing previous Drawdown events. The evening was filled with excitement, fellowship, and fun, making it one of our most memorable fundraisers to date.

Congrats also goes out to Mr. R. Fred Pitts our "MVP"! Fred sold more Drawdown tickets than any other club member. We think the last count of 25 tickets!

Three very special programs reaped the benefits of our Annual Kiwanis Club of Tupelo Drawdown each receiving a check for \$10,000: Hunger Coalition, The Shine Foundation, and the Tupelo High School JROTC.

The Tupelo HS JROTC program instills leadership and citizenship for high school students.



Tupelo Drawdown MVP R. Fred Pitts



Hunger Coalition provides food for families in the community



The Shine Foundation provides opportunities and support for those with special needs and their families.



POWER WHEELS ROAD RALLY

The Kiwanis Club of Tupelo generously sponsored the drinks and snacks for the 4th Annual Power Wheels Road Rally held at Ballard Park in Tupelo. This fun, free event is designed for children ages 3 to 7 years old who enjoy riding Power Wheels, scooters, and other battery-operated vehicles around the park's walking track. Along the route, participants stopped at several exciting activity stations, creating an engaging and memorable experience for the children. The event provides a safe, family-friendly environment where kids can have fun away from traffic and loud noises while staying active outdoors. Parents and grandparents enjoyed cheering on the young drivers and watching them burn off some energy while making lasting memories. Approximately 30 cars, scooters, and battery-operated vehicles participated in this year's rally, making it another successful community event.



Jessic Webb, Treasurer; Melonie Kight, Past President; Travis Beard, K-Kids Chair; and Candace Hunt, President at the Road Rally

Vicksburg Kiwanis Hosts Clergy Appreciation

By Tom Osburn, Vicksburg Kiwanis Club

The Kiwanis Club of Vicksburg hosted a Clergy Appreciation Day on May 19th. Twenty members of the local clergy attended and were recognized for the service they provide to the community. Pastor Rick Mills was the speaker for event. He noted that while members of the clergy sort of have some days off, they are really on call 24x7. He told the clergy members that they are God’s “A-Team” and that there is no “B-Team”. In addition to providing lunch to the clergy members, the club also gave each of them a \$25 Gift Card to show our appreciation for their dedication.



Tupelo Kiwanis: End of School Parties

By Melonie Kight, Tupelo Kiwanis Club

The Kiwanis Club of Tupelo loves to celebrate hardworking students with end of the school year parties!



K-Kids End of School Party



Kiwanis Keepsers Reading End of School Snow Cone Party - Kiwanis members volunteer weekly with Parkway Elementary School second graders to help improve their reading skills.

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:

October 2026 Issue = Deadline September 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
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of Kiwanis International.

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John Gherardi, *Lafayette, LA*

Region VII Trustee:

Darren Green, *Alexandria, LA*

DISTRICT OFFICE INFORMATION:

Jen Robertson, Executive Director:

jen@lamisstenn.org

Tiffany LaPorte, Administrative Assistant:

tiffany@lamisstenn.org

225-769-9233

districtoffice@lamisstenn.org

www.lamisstenn.org

Mailing address:

LaMissTenn Kiwanis District Office

10000 Celtic Drive, Suite 706

Baton Rouge, LA 70809

HOURS:

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