



NEWS

October 2026

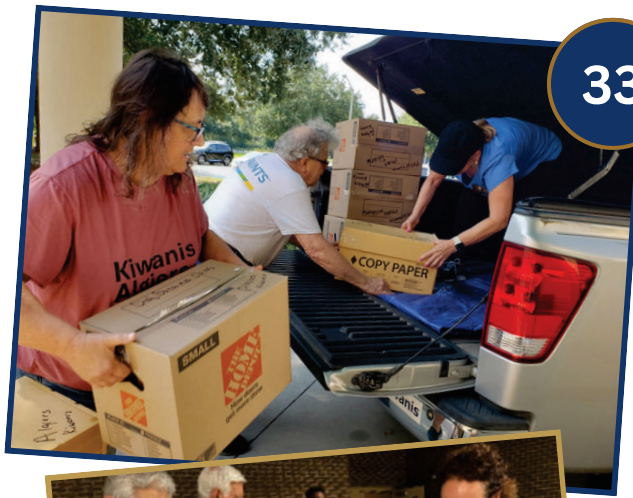


**Big Hearts, Bright Starts: Twin Cities Kiwanis
Supplies Little Learners!**

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: BIG HEARTS, BRIGHT STARTS

Twin Cities Kiwanis ensured that *every* student at South Fulton Elementary School started the year equipped for success, providing school supplies through a generous grant from the LaMissTenn Foundation. Pictured are members Cathy Fry, John Holzner, Lawanda Alfred, Mary Catherine Hollingsworth, and Region 1 Trustee Kimberly Jackson.

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Boots on the Ground

By Andrew Dozier, Governor

Thank you, my fellow Kiwanians, for the incredible trust you have placed in me and for the privilege of serving as your District Governor.

I will work hard every day to lead the this “Great Historical District” implementing our organizational goals, missions, developing and leading a strong district leadership team, communicating the vision and messages to the members in the district and aligning with members by motivating and inspiring them to take action.

Serving alongside dedicated leaders, members with passionate hearts and lifelong change makers, I am deeply humbled. We do not join Kiwanis to fill a seat; we join because we share an unshakable belief that a single act of service can change a child’s life, and when we multiply that service, together we change the world.

My theme is simple: **Boots on the Ground**. It means showing up for our club, our members, our communities, and most importantly, the children and families we serve by leading with presence and moving beyond meetings to reach people where they are and leave no clubs behind.

As Kiwanis members, we cannot lead from a distance. We must be willing to step forward, roll up our sleeves, and make a difference.



Whether it is helping a child succeed in school, supporting a family in need, strengthening a struggling a club, or encouraging a new member to become a leader, our service must be visible and meaningful.

I believe respect is earned through service. We should respect one another, respect the responsibility entrusted to us, and earn the respect of the communities we serve by keeping our communities and following through on our promises.

My commitment as Governor is to put our members and people first. I want to visit clubs, listen to their concerns, celebrate their successes, and work alongside them to find solutions. Every Kiwanis club is important, and every member has something valuable to contribute.

Boots on the Ground, with all of our superheroes, our mission is possible working together. We can strengthen our clubs, grow our membership, develop new leaders, and expand our service projects.

As we prepare for this first quarter, we must plan now. Every club should have a strategic plan focusing on: membership and engagement, leadership and education, community impact, branding and image, and financial viability.

Our Service Leadership Programs give our young people the opportunity to discover their own potential while learning the value of teamwork, responsibility, and the community service. By investing in Key Club, Builders Club, K-Kids, Aktion Club, and Circle K, we are helping to develop the leaders of tomorrow. My vision is to strengthen our SLP’s, expand participation, and make sure every young person has an opportunity to experience the power of service and leadership.

As we move forward together, one of my priorities will be to Build, Nurture, and Retain our Kiwanis family. We must build stronger clubs, stronger membership, and stronger community relationships. We must invite people to experience the joy and purpose of Kiwanis service.

Once we bring people into Kiwanis, we must make them feel valued, welcome, and connected. We must develop our members, encourage leadership, and create opportunities for everyone to serve.

Continued on page 4

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Boots on the Ground Continued . . .

Membership is more than recruiting new members. It is giving people a reason to stay. When members see the impact of their service, feel appreciated, and know that their contributions matter, they become committed Kiwanis leaders for years to come.

That's how we create stronger clubs and a stronger district. With **Boots on the Ground**, we will not simply talk about growing Kiwanis, we will go into our communities, engage our members, and make a difference.

My challenge to each member of the Louisiana Mississippi West Tennessee District is to find One new member for your club in the first quarter. This goal is attainable, by working with your club membership chair and using the membership plan for recruiting new members.

Plan for members of your club to attend the Mid-Year Education Conference, District Convention, Division Council Meeting, and Inter-clubs. Participation and fellowship create unity and collaboration across the district. Together we become a district united in service.

We must focus on getting our clubs to membership strength, retaining our current members and devising a plan to replace our charter members when they are no longer part of our clubs. Younger professionals must be part of our recruiting plan.

Kiwanis is doing great things in communities every day, but we must do a better job of telling our story. As District Governor, I will make branding and marketing Kiwanis an important part of our effort to build stronger clubs, attract new members,

and focus on club identity, meeting locations and club projects.

We need a clear and consistent message about who we are and what we do. When people hear Kiwanis, they should immediately think of service, children, leadership, and community. We must get the word out through social media, television, websites, and community events.

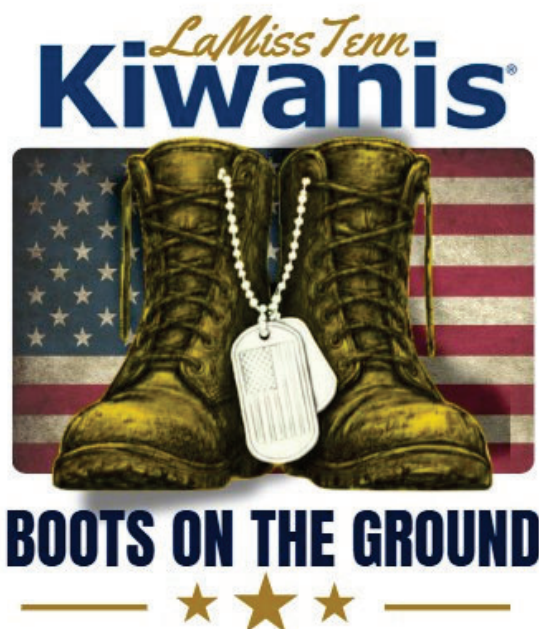
I want to thank the LaMissTenn District Foundation for all the hard work and commitment from each member ensuring that the Foundation provides financial assistance for our Kiwanis projects and programs within our district. I ask all Kiwanians to become a Friend of the Foundation and all clubs to support Annual Club Giving and the endowments the Foundation has to offer.

My Governor project is for our veterans. I have added to our annual community awards a Veteran of the Year, and a plaque with Operation Bench to honor and recognize a Kiwanis veteran or veteran in the community.

Looking forward to working with our members, clubs presidents, lieutenant governors, trustees, past district officers and our executive team, the goal is to work for our members to give them the tools and resources to be successful.

I Salute You!

Andrew
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*If everyone is
moving
forward
together, then
success takes
care of itself.*

Membership Growth

By Laura Gilliland, Governor-Elect



As you probably know by now, Governor Andrew Dozier and I are focused on **MEMBERSHIP GROWTH**. The road map to get there is to first **BRAND YOUR CLUB** and then to **BUILD, NURTURE, and RETAIN**.

BRAND - We look forward to hearing what you're doing to brand Kiwanis and grow our district. I noticed that the Kiwanis Club of Central is doing short video clips on Facebook about what they are doing to serve their community. I was also impressed with the Kiwanis Club of Sabine doing Life Skills with teens in their community. Put your service projects on the radio, tv, on social media, and in the newspaper and magazines. Let the public know what you're doing, and make them want to be a part of it.

When possible, invite your friends to help with your service projects. It doesn't take long, and they will become members.

BUILD - There are several ways that you can participate. You can serve as Membership Chair, do Google Document Research, be an Appointment Setter, go out in the field and be "Boots on the Ground," be an Appointment Reminder, be an Organization Meeting Reminder, be a Club Sponsor, be a Club Coach... just to name a few. When you invite a guest speaker, make sure at the end of their presentation you ask them to become a Kiwanian.

NURTURE - The first thing that must be done is to recognize each member's **VALUE**. Assign someone as the Outreach Chair (the one who recognizes birthdays, Kiwanis anniversaries, achievements and awards in the community) and another as the Greeter at Meetings. Get to know members by having a couple of members do three-minute Member Profiles and recognize special achievements by giving a Member Spotlight at each meeting. Have several committees and utilize

everyone's talents.

RETAIN - Make your meetings are fun by playing music, singing, having interesting guest speakers, having socials, etc. Don't get stuck in a rut. Change it up from time to time. Be creative! Put together a phone tree. When members don't attend meetings, give them a call (notice I did not say email). Give them a personal touch to let them know that they were missed.

This is not new information. This is simply common sense. You may not want to utilize any of these suggestions, but Governor Andrew and I are asking you to come up with a plan...a plan to grow your club.



*Boots on the Ground:
Salute to Service!*

Our Mission is Possible! Building Stronger Clubs and Serving More Children

By John Gherardi, Vice Governor



Opening New Clubs

There are communities throughout our district where children and families would benefit from the service of Kiwanis. We must continue to identify those communities, bring people together, and introduce them to the opportunity to make a difference through Kiwanis.

Expanding and Elevating the Kiwanis Brand

We have an incredible story to tell. Every service project, every scholarship, every fundraiser, and every child we help is an opportunity to show our communities what Kiwanis stands for. We need to make sure people know who we are, what we do, and most importantly, why we do it.

When we build strong clubs, membership grows. When membership grows, our ability to serve grows. And when our ability to serve grows, we can make an even greater impact across our entire district.

As Governor Andrew has said: We need our "Boots on the Ground"

My primary commitment this year will be to support Governor Andrew and our district leadership team as we work together to strengthen Kiwanis throughout Louisiana, Mississippi, and West Tennessee.

I have my **boots on the ground**, and I'm ready to hit the ground running!

I believe leadership isn't about sitting behind a desk and waiting for people to come to you. It is about getting out into our communities, visiting our clubs, listening to our members, understanding their challenges, celebrating their successes, and finding ways to help them succeed.

I want our clubs to know that they are not alone. If a club needs help with membership, leadership development, service projects, fundraising, or simply needs someone to listen, **I want to be there.**

Our success will not be measured by what one person accomplishes. It will be measured by what **we accomplish together.**

This is our opportunity to build stronger clubs, welcome new members, open new clubs, develop new leaders, and elevate the Kiwanis name throughout our district. Most importantly, this is an opportunity to serve more children.

Every new member represents another set of hands ready to serve. Every stronger club represents a greater ability to make an impact. Every new club represents another community where children can benefit from the work of Kiwanis.

The challenge before us is great, but so is the opportunity.

Our mission is possible—and it starts with us.

So, as we begin this new Kiwanis year, I ask you to join me. Put on your boots, step forward, and let's get to work together.

One Child. One Community. One District at a Time.

Thank you for allowing me to serve. I am excited about what lies ahead and look forward to working alongside each and every one of you.

Let's make this our best Kiwanis year yet!

Yours in service,

John Gherardi

As we begin a new Kiwanis year, I want to take a moment to sincerely thank everyone for your support, encouragement, and confidence in me. I am honored and humbled by the privilege of serving as your 2026–2027 Vice Governor of the great and historic Louisiana-Mississippi-West Tennessee District of Kiwanis International.

Kiwanis has a proud history of changing lives and making a difference in communities around the world. Our motto says it best: "Serving the children of the world." Our mission is equally clear: "Improve the world, one child and one community at a time."

Those words are more than a motto or a mission statement. They are a call to action.

Membership: The Key to Our Mission

If we are going to continue making a difference in the lives of children and families, we must first strengthen the foundation of our organization—our Kiwanis clubs and our members.

That is why our focus will be centered on three important priorities:

Strengthening Existing Clubs

Strong clubs are the heart of a strong district. We must support our current clubs, help them overcome challenges, develop new leaders, and give them the tools and encouragement they need to thrive.

Happy Kiwanis New Year!

By Marcel Lashover, Immediate Past Governor



Hello to all LaMissTenn Kiwanis Members,

Well, what a great year I have had being your 2025-2026 Governor, which has gone by so fast. I have met so many great Kiwanians throughout my travels in the district and at events.

Wow, DCON 2026 was the largest one attended in recent history, and many said it was one of the best DCONs they've attended. So, we accomplished what the host committee set out to accomplish. I hope to see you at the 2027 DCON Cruise out of New Orleans.

This year, we have opened 3 new clubs and have 1 more to reach our goal of 4. We will open the 4th club in mid-October 2026 in Abita Springs, LA. If you want to help or know someone who lives in that area, please let us know.

I asked in the last newsletter if your club would be interested in sponsoring and supporting a new club; please check out the New Club Resources page on the district's website and reach out to the district office to find out what you need to do to make it happen. Thanks for stepping up.

On October 1st, 2027, I will continue to ask you to do your part by joining 2026-2027 Governor Andrew, Governor-Elect Laura, Vice Governor John, Trustees, and Lt. Governors, and to keep asking your friends, business associates, and family to join Kiwanis for the kids. Remember, if you "Don't ASK, then you Don't GET"

If you need help, please reach out to any of your 2026-2027 leaders. If you can't reach them, please email me: lamisstenngov2526@gmail.com. Or call my cell at: 504-272-1600.

Thanks again; it's been my honor to serve you, your club, and the kids of LaMissTenn this past year.

A handwritten signature of Marcel Lashover in black ink.

2026-2027 Immediate Past Governor

International Trustee Linda Ramsey

The District is excited to announce our very own Linda Ramsey was elected to Kiwanis International Trustee at the Kiwanis International Convention in Manila, Philippines!





Carnival Dream Cruise to Cozumel



July 29 - August 2, 2027

DCON 2027 will be held on a 4-day Western Caribbean cruise on the Carnival Dream!

Registration starts at \$800/person & includes registration, room, food, and cruise festivities!

\$150 Initial Deposits due October 1, 2026

Scan for more
information and registration



Mid-Year Education Conference



Save
THE
Date

March 20, 2027 ✦ Baton Rouge, LA

Get your
LaMissTenn
Kiwanis
Merchandise
[HERE:](#)



Membership in the Key of K!

By Claude Vinson, District Membership Chair



Every great song begins with a simple scale, but in the hands of inspired voices, those simple notes become something powerful. If you took piano lessons as a child, you remember the very chords you were taught to play, Do-Re-Mi-Fa-So-La-Ti-Do. This is more than a sequence of sound, it is a reminder that harmony is built ONE note, ONE voice and ONE shared purpose at a time. In Kiwanis, membership growth is much the same. It begins with ordinary people, choosing extraordinary service, welcoming others into the mission and helping each club become a stronger instrument for changing children's lives.

When we put music into the mission, each note becomes a call to action. Each marching step invites us to build clubs that are not only larger, but more joyful, more connected and more ready to serve. Membership is not simply about adding names to a roster; it is about expanding the corps of hearts and hands committed to making the world better for children and communities.

Do: Do the Invitation

Membership does not grow by accident. It takes "Boots on the Ground" when one Kiwanian has the courage and kindness to say, "Come serve with us." The first note is action: invite a neighbor, a colleague, a parent, a volunteer, a young professional or a community partner to experience the warmth and purpose of Kiwanis firsthand. A sincere invitation can become the first note in someone else's lifelong song of service.

Re: Reach Through Kiwanis Kompanions

No one should have to find their way into service alone. Kiwanis Kompanions can become friendly guides, who help guests and new members feel welcomed, valued and needed from the very beginning. A Kompanion greets, introduces,

explains, encourages and, most importantly, follows up; not as a duty, but as an act of fellowship. Through kompanionship, strangers become guests, guests become members and members become part of the Kiwanis family!



Mi: (Me)mbership begins with Me!

Every person who walks through the door carries a story, a gift and a reason to serve. Some are drawn by children, some by community, some by friendship and some by the desire to make their time matter. When clubs listen for each person's "why," membership becomes deeply personal. We are no longer inviting people merely to attend a meeting; we are inviting them to discover where their passion can become purpose.

Fa: Follow the A.S.K. to G.E.T. Rhythm

A.S.K. to G.E.T. gives clubs a hopeful rhythm for growth: Ask someone to visit, Share the Kiwanis story and Keep the connection alive so the club can Grow, Engage and

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Membership in the Key of K! . . . Continued

Thrive. The beauty of this rhythm is its simplicity. One question can open a door. One shared story can spark a calling. One faithful follow-up can help someone move from curiosity to commitment and from membership to leadership.



So: Sow Service at the Club Level

The “so” note reminds us to sow seeds where membership truly comes alive: in the local club. Clubs grow when they are visible, active and filled with a spirit of service. Every service project, school partnership, youth programs, and community event becomes an open invitation. When people see Kiwanians serving with joy, they do not just see an organization, they see a movement they may want to join.

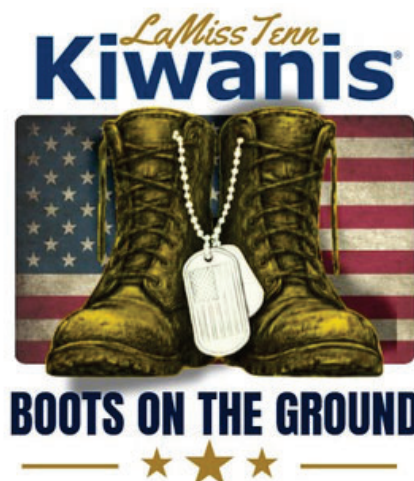
La: Laughter Lifts Members Through Belonging

Laughter is the harmony that keeps the song strong. New members stay when they feel connected, inspired and useful.

Clubs lift members by recognizing their service, inviting their ideas, opening leadership pathways and checking in with care before someone drifts away. Belonging is not an accident; it is a promise we renew every time we make room for another voice in the chorus. And, doing the occasional Hokey Pokey doesn't hurt; try it!

Ti: Till Growth with Boots on the Ground

Membership leadership is most inspiring when it is close enough to listen, encourage and serve alongside clubs. “Boots on the Ground” means going where the heartbeat of Kiwanis is strongest—into club meetings, service projects, community events and honest conversations with members. When leaders walk with clubs, celebrate progress and help remove obstacles, they turn support into momentum and remind every member that they are not serving alone.



Do: Do It Again

The scale ends where it began: Do. That is the promise of membership growth, it is never finished, and it is never beyond reach. Invite again. Welcome again. Follow up again. Serve again. Visit clubs again. Encourage again. With every repetition, the melody grows stronger until membership is no longer a campaign, but a culture of invitation, belonging and joyful service.



Bringing the Notes Together

When Kiwanis Kompanions welcomes and supports members, when A.S.K. to G.E.T. turns invitations into relationships and when “Boots on the Ground” brings encouragement directly to clubs, membership becomes more than a number. It becomes a living chorus of people who believe children deserve champions, communities deserve Superheroes and every club deserves the energy to serve with confidence and hope. So let the music begin!

WELCOME TO THE KIWANIS FAMILY!

Reflects new membership from 6/24/26 to 9/28/2026

Anthony Achee, *Algiers*
Bo Agnew, *Pearl*
Freddie Anderson, *Northshore Mandeville*
Whitney Andrus, *Walker*
Lainey Armstrong, *Dyersburg*
Dean Baldus, *Northshore Mandeville*
Mikki Baldus, *Northshore Mandeville*
Denver Ballard, *Denham Springs*
Cathy Beeding, *Dawn Busters*
Janie Beers, *Third District*
Margaret Berger, *Plaquemines*
Peggy Boettner, *Northshore Mandeville*
William Bronson, *Memphis*
Kelly Burns, *Southside*
Laura Clements, *Dyersburg*
Michelle Colombo, *Dawn Busters*
Abby Cox, *Twin Cities*
Milky Crowe, *Northshore Mandeville*
Michael Davis, *River City Savannah*
Paul Devlin, *Ruston*
Justin Dickens, *Laurel*
Jordan Dupuy, *Natchitoches*
Jenna Eisenman, *Plaquemines*
Bryron Feduccia, *Ruston*
Connor Foy, *Pearl*
Christine Friedman, *Bayou Teche*
Leslie Gore, *Vicksburg*
Gina Greer, *Southside*
Melinda Hall, *St. Bernard-Arabi*
Paula Hardy, *Opelousas*
Brandi Hatchell, *Walker*
Kyle Hatten, *Pascagoula*
Johnny Hays, *Picayune*
Andrews Hays, *Dyersburg*
Sharon Howes, *Camellia City*
Aniston Hughes, *Vicksburg*
Scott Hunsaker, *South Lake Charles*

Kaitlyn Johns, *Pineville*
Angie Johnson, *Alexandria*
Natalie Kelly, *Pineville*
Jodi Knight, *Northshore Mandeville*
Stephen Lahasky, *New Iberia-Cajun*
Terri LaMonte, *Dawn Busters*
Jeremy Lapeyrouse, *Baton Rouge*
Janice Larocca, *Northshore Mandeville*
Michael Lavergne, *South Lake Charles*
Cameron LeDoux, *Pineville*
Lynnette Markle, *Ascension*
Jason McCarty, *Rankin County*
Margie Melancon, *Central*
Jiaxin Miller, *Biloxi*
Wayne Mouhot, *Southwest Louisiana*
Natalie Newton, *Dawn Busters*
Eddie Ponds, *Ponchatoula*
Casie Qualls, *Hammond*
Ariana Rachal, *Natchitoches*
Michael Retana, *Plaquemines*
Heidi Rhea, *Northshore Mandeville*
Hope Rider, *Northeast Shelby County*
Jessica Ritchey, *Lafayette*
Annabeth Sarbacker, *Northshore Mandeville*
Joshua Caleb Saucier, *Laurel*
Lauren Schindler, *Hammond*
Jomeka Smith, *Waynesboro*
Jeffrey Stogsdill, *Ruston*
Richard Strobach, *Hammond*
Terry Taylor, *Walker*
Amber Thatch Fretwell, *Laurel*
Lisa Turner, *Northeast Shelby County*
Ashley Vaughan, *Dyersburg*
Constance White, *Northshore Mandeville*
Russell Wilson, *Alexandria*
Michelle Wright, *Walker*

108th LaMissTenn District Convention Recap

The 108th LaMissTenn Convention held in Kenner, LA from July 31-August 2 was a successful gathering of more than 300 Kiwanians and guests. The weekend was filled with plenty of education, renewing old friendships and making new ones, taking care of official business, and second lining at Governor Marcel's Saturday night Mardi Gras parade party. The District Foundation's Gift Basket Raffle sales, Friends of the Foundation contributions, and Endowment purchases were a great success. Marcel Lashover was retired as Governor by our International Trustee Valarie Brown-Klingelhofer. Elected at the House of Delegates on Saturday were Abbeville Kiwanis Member Andrew Dozier for Governor, Cortana Kiwanis Club Member Laura Gilliland for Governor-Elect and Lafayette Kiwanis Member John Gherardi for Vice Governor. Valarie Brown-Klingelhofer installed the Governor,



International Trustee Valarie Brown-Klingelhofer installs 2026-2027 Trustees Kimberly Jackson, Region 1; Tracy Cameron, Region 2, and Tom Osburn, Region 3.

Governor-Elect and Vice Governor as well as Region Trustees Kimberly Jackson, Tracy Cameron, & Tom Osburn, and the new Lieutenant Governors. A very special thanks goes to the Kiwanis Club of Dawn Busters and Convention Chair Mike Haffner for coordinating and hosting this amazing event!

Keynote Speaker LA Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser and LaMissTenn 2025-2026 Governor Marcel Lashover



2026-2027 Governor Andrew Dozier and newly installed Lieutenant Governors



LaMissTenn DCON 2026: Governor Team

At DCON 2026, International Trustee Valarie Brown-Klingelhoef installed the 2026–2027 LaMissTenn Governor team and officially retired Governor Marcel Lashover, who now transitions to the role of Immediate Past Governor. Congratulations to our 2026-2027 Governor Team! We are looking forward to a great year under thier leadership!



Andrew Dozier
2026-2027
Governor



Laura Gilliland
2026-2027
Governor-Elect



John Gherardi
2026-2027
Vice Governor



Marcel Lashover
2026-2027
Immediate Past Governor



Thanks to the 2025-2026 LaMissTenn Board for a wonderful year!

LaMissTenn DCON 2026: Governor's Mardi Gras Party



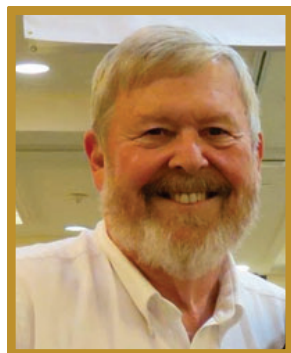
LaMissTenn DCON 2026: Hall of Fame

The LaMissTenn District Hall of Fame Program recognizes past and present Kiwanians who have dedicated their lives to Kiwanis and their community in the LaMissTenn District. This distinction identifies Kiwanians who have exemplified the Objects of Kiwanis and made extraordinary contributions to the LaMissTenn District on a club, divisional, regional, and/or district level. Congratulations to the 2026 class of the LaMissTenn Hall of Fame: Patrice Cusimano, Cliff Giffin, Joe Pratt, George Rojas, and Gerard Ruth. These individuals were recognized during the 2026 LaMissTenn District Convention Fellowship Luncheon.

Patrice Cusimano
St. Bernard-Arabid Kiwanis
Past Governor



Cliff Giffin
Northshore Mandeville Kiwanis



Joe Pratt
1944-2023
Lakeside, Metairie Kiwanis



George Rojas
1934-2026
Dawn Busters Kiwanis



Gerard Ruth
1931-2026
Red Stick Kiwanis



Accepting Hall of Fame Awards from Governor Marcel Lashover (left to right): Patrice Cusimano, Cliff Giffin, Sue Pratt (wife) in honor of Joe Pratt, Dawn Busters Kiwanis President Jackie Dardano in honor of George Rojas, and Marsha Morgan (daughter) in honor of Gerard Ruth.

LaMissTenn DCON 2026: AWARDS



Congratulations to our LaMissTenn Kiwanis Super Recruiters (from left to right): Marcel Lashover, 12 members; Laura Gilliland, 17 members; Eva Abate, 7 members; Scott Parker, 5 members; Mel Dussel, 12 members; Andrew Dozier, 10 members; and Linda Ramsey, 5 members. Not pictured: Jonathan Booth, 7 members; Daniel Fields, 6 members; and Tracy Houck, 6 members.



Receiving awards for club newsletters: Opelousas Kiwanis, Carrie Richard, Bronze Section Winner; Ascension Kiwanis, Boni Pater, Bronze Section Honorable Mention; Algiers Kiwanis, Linda Leger, Silver Section Winner; and Vicksburg Kiwanis, Tom Osburn, Silver Section Honorable Mention. Receiving awards for club Facebook Pages: Plaquemines Kiwanis, Amanda Seal & Tina Retana, Silver Section Honorable Mention; Opelousas Kiwanis, Carrie Richard, Bronze Section Winner; Ascension Kiwanis, Donna Leggett, Bronze Section Honorable Mention; Dyersburg Kiwanis, Sandy Tarkington, Silver Section Winner; Tupelo Kiwanis, Melonie Kight, Gold Section Winner; and Alexandria Kiwanis, Mary Byrd, Gold Section Winner.



Thank You . . . Thank You . . . Thank You!

By Cathy Simmons, DCON Service Project Chair



It is with the utmost gratitude that I say these words to all the clubs who participated in the DCON Service project: Activity Kits, benefitting the local Ronald McDonald House (RMH). YOU and YOUR CLUB stepped up when asked to bring supplies to fill activity kits (or send monetary donations) for families staying at the house while their children received medical care. I also want to thank my team from “Kiwanis Club of New Orleans” and Linda Giffin (Kiwanis Club of Northshore Mandeville) for hours of sorting these supplies. This project was a huge success because of the generosity of clubs bringing supplies as well as those working behind the scenes.

Beginning on Friday afternoon, the supplies started arriving. My team began writing down club names.

Supplies were stacked in the back of the meeting room next to registration. By Saturday morning, Kiwanians began dropping off their donated supplies outside the room before it opened. No club names on boxes. By 8:30am, we were overflowing with supplies, so we moved outside the meeting room, to the foyer. Supplies kept coming ... Opening session started. Supplies were STILL being dropped off! For the next 3 hours, the supplies were categorized and placed on 3 long tables for the service project.

Grace McIntosh, Director of the local Ronald McDonald House, spoke at the Fellowship luncheon and discussed the myriad of activities and services they offer for the families staying at the house.



Jennifer Freeman of Natchez Trace Kiwanis makes her 5th pass through the assembly line alongside Service Project Chair Cathy Simmons of New Orleans Kiwanis.

After the luncheon, as people filed out of the ballroom, we handed everyone a bag to fill, as they went down the “assembly line”. In just under an hour, 153 activity bags were overstuffed with a plethora of art supplies, journals, inspiration notes, games, gadgets AMAZING! We had more duplicated supplies, so we packed 12 boxes to send back with Grace, to the RMH to use as needed.

We also had a secondary project going on called the “Inspiration Table”, wherein anyone during the entire convention, could take 5 minutes to sit down and write a note of cheer or encouragement to our RMH families. There were stacks of card stock, markers, crayons and stickers for anyone to design these blank cards into a smile for a child. Over 300 cards were made during the convention!

Again, thank you to all the clubs who sent supplies or monetary donations, worked behind the scenes, or took a moment to draw/write cards of encouragement. YOU are the ONE, making a DIFFERENCE in the life of a CHILD.

Yours in Service,

LaMissTenn DCON 2026: Matches



Love & Marriage



Chips & Salsa



Bread & Butter



Charlie & Willy Wonka



Jill & Jack



Priscilla Presly & Elvis



June Carter & Johnny Cash



Mario & Luigi



Miss Piggy & Kermit the Frog



Betty & Bernie Rubble



Bonnie & Clyde



Mickey & Minnie Mouse



Sweet & Sour



Sandy Olsson & Danny Zuko



Sonny & Cher



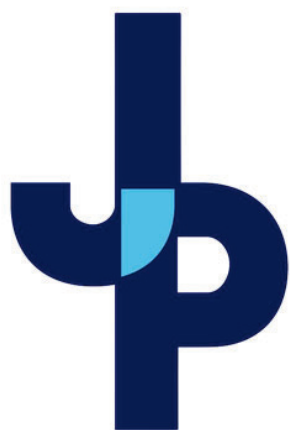
Wilma & Fred Flinstone



Tarzan & Jane

Thanks to our 2026 DCON Sponsors!

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Jefferson Parish

State of Louisiana

Gold Sponsors



DAWN BUSTERS KIWANIS
METAIRIE, LOUISIANA

Silver Sponsors

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Bronze Sponsor

CC Event Entertainment

LaMissTenn DCON 2026: Community Awards

This year, the District Foundation contributed \$300 each to four charities chosen by the District's Annual Community Award recipients.

Our Lawperson of the Year is a dedicated public servant whose commitment to safety and community has made a lasting impact. Lt. Clay Dean consistently goes above and beyond, supporting local events, encouraging youth, assisting families and serving as a strong role model throughout the community. His leadership and willingness to help wherever needed reflects a deep sense of responsibility and compassion. He has also been a steadfast partner to our Kiwanis Club of Martin, lending his time and support to activities and events that benefit children and families. His professionalism, service and genuine care for others embody the values of this award. Nominated by the **Kiwanis Club of Martin**, we proudly recognize **Lt. Clay Dean** as our **Lawperson of the Year**, celebrating his integrity, his dedication and the positive influence he brings to the community every day. His chosen charity for the Foundation's \$300 donation is the Weakley County Prevention Coalition, an organization that provides drug and alcohol education and prevention activities.

Our Teacher of the Year has been a cornerstone of the Columbus education community for 30 years. Heather Ford has taught across public and private schools and found her calling in kindergarten at Annunciation Catholic School, where she has served for 18 years. She believes meaningful teaching begins with building a relationship with every child and works tirelessly to help students grow academically, emotionally and socially. Heather is a valued member of the school's leadership team and a dedicated community advocate, organizing fundraisers for charities across Lowndes County and beyond. Nominated by the **Kiwanis Club of Columbus**, we proudly



Andrew Dozier, 2025-2026 Governor-Elect, awards Lt. Clay Dean with Lawperson of the Year and Michael Pechon, St. Bernard-Arabi Kiwanis, awards Andrew Nixon with Firefighter of the Year.



Heather Ford Teacher of the Year

recognize **Heather Ford** as our **Teacher of the Year**, celebrating her heart, her service, and her lifelong impact on children and families. Her chosen charity for the Foundation's \$300 donation is Annunciation Catholic School.

Our Firefighter of the Year's courage and quick action saved a life on September 20, 2025. While driving home from a wedding, Andrew Nixon came upon a fiery crash on Interstate 10 where a car had collided with an 18-wheeler and was rapidly engulfed in flames. Without hesitation, he ran toward the burning vehicle and fought to reach the unresponsive driver. After cutting his hands trying to break through the windshield, he forced his way in through the passenger side and pulled her to safety just moments before the car was fully consumed by fire. Nominated by the **Kiwanis Club of St. Bernard-Arabi**, we proudly recognize **Andrew Nixon** as our **Firefighter of the Year**, honoring his bravery, his selflessness and the life he saved through extraordinary courage. His chosen charity for the Foundation's \$300 donation is the National Drowning Prevention Alliance.

Our Layperson of the Year is a remarkable community leader whose quiet dedication has strengthened organizations across Shreveport. Nell Shehee serves with wisdom and humility on many

boards, including the Shreveport YMCA, the Shreveport Symphony Orchestra, LSU-Alexandria and Holy Angels. Her leadership has helped establish meaningful foundations that reflect her passions, including her newest effort, Operation Kindness, which encourages compassion and celebrates acts of generosity. Nominated by the **Kiwanis Club of Shreveport**, we are proud to recognize **Nell Shehee** as our **Layperson of the Year**, honoring a life that lifts others and strengthens the community through compassion and purpose. Her chosen charity for the Foundation's \$300 donation is the Renzi Education & Arts Center.

Congratulations to our 2026 Community Award Recipients!



Marcel Lashover, 2025-2026 Governor awards Nell Shehee with Layperson of the Year.

Welcome to the Foundation Facts

by Betty Carter, District Foundatoin President



I'm excited to begin sharing a little more about your Kiwanis Foundation. Each issue, I'll bring you a simple fact about the Foundation—who we are, what we do, and how we can help our Kiwanis clubs make an even greater difference for children and our communities. My goal is simple: to educate and engage our Kiwanis family about the Foundation and all that it has to offer.

DID YOU KNOW? The Foundation is here to support the work of Kiwanis and help our clubs make a difference in the lives of children and communities. **YOUR FOUNDATION, YOUR RESOURCE!!**

** What grants are available? * Who is eligible to apply? * How does my club benefit from this foundation?*

** Who should I contact for further inquiries?* **SO LETS START LEARNING ABOUT YOUR FOUNDATION!!**

The LaMissTenn District Foundation Board would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all 53 Clubs for their generous support in providing such beautiful and thoughtfully curated baskets for our District Foundation gift-basket fundraiser at the 108th District Convention in Kenner, LA. Your contributions truly make a difference, and we couldn't achieve our goals without your kindness and dedication! Each basket donated provides for grants to clubs in our District. Thank you for being such a vital part of our mission!

Acadiana (3)
Alexandria
Algiers
Ascension
Baton Rouge
BR Early Risers
Big Easy
Biloxi
Bluff City
Central
Columbus

Cortana (2)
Dawn Busters
Dyersburg
eLaMissTenn
Germantown
Greater Covington
Greater Ouachita
Greenville
Gulfport
Hammond
Kenner North

Lafayette
Lake Charles
Louisville
Martin
Memphis
Millington
Morehouse
Natchez
Natchitoches
New Orleans
Northshore Mandeville (2)

Opelousas
Plaquemines (5)
Ponchatoula
Pontchartrain
Rankin County
Red Stick
Ruston
Shreveport
Southwest LA
Southern Hills
St. Bernard-Arabi

Third District
Tri Parishes
Tupelo
Twin Cities
Union City
Vicksburg
Waynesboro
Winnfield
Zachary



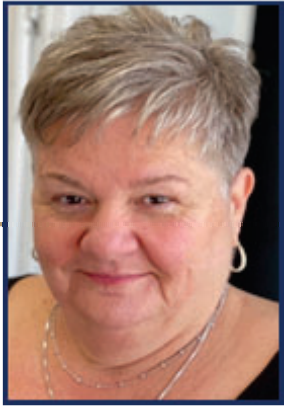
2025-2026 Foundation President Jonathan Booth presents a John T. Roberts endowment award to Governor Marcel Lashover.



Anna Yarkovsky, Germantown Kiwanis, was the proud winner of the Foundation's River of Life endowment raffle.



The Foundation auctioned an LSU Volleyball adorned with Swarovski crystals by Bunnie Cannon, daughter of LSU legend and Heisman winner Billy Cannon. Donated by the Baton Rouge Early Risers Kiwanis Club, it raised \$2,200.



Key Leader South Registration Now Open!

By MiLisa York, Key Leader South District Administrator

It is that time of year again! **Key Leader South** is set for November 13–15, 2026 at Camp Istrouma located at 25975 Greenwell Springs Road in Greenwell Springs, LA. The team and I are looking forward to another incredible Key Leader South weekend. Registration for this event opened on Monday, August 31st and will continue until Friday, October 30th. Registration and sponsorship can be found at: k11.site.kiwanis.org/key-leader-south

For those that are unfamiliar with Key Leader South, it is a leadership program for high school and graduating 8th grade students. It empowers teens to become more caring and confident leaders. Our mission is to inspire young people to do their personal best through service leadership. A Kiwanis International certified instructor will lead classes as students learn skills essential to becoming values-driven leaders. They will connect with students from other backgrounds and experience what it means to be a team player. Real leaders know that working together and

putting others first is the KEY to completing important projects. Participants leave having made lifetime friends who share their integrity and values.

I encourage all clubs of this great and historic district to consider sending or sponsoring a child for this once in a lifetime event. Our goal is 50 children to be in attendance, and we can attain this goal with your help! Thank you for your support!

REGISTRATION FEES

Student Participant: \$250

Student Facilitator: \$150

Adult Chaperone:

- **FREE** with background check (\$35)
- Kiwanis members can request a background check through Kiwanis Engage.
- Non-Kiwanis members may request a background check by emailing districtoffice@lamisstenn.org.
- Chaperones are required to have the following Praesidium courses:
 1. Abuse Risk Management
 2. Social Media Safety
 3. Preventing Sexual Activity Among Adolescents

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

Please consider sponsoring students!
Scan QR code for more information.

Key Leader North Update

By Linda Ramsey, Key Leader North District Administrator



At this time of year, things are fairly slow for Kiwanis Key Leader North except for continued follow-up for this past spring's event. We tried the new curriculum this past spring, and everyone gave it a favorable review, and changes will continue to be submitted until the finalized program is set.

The Kiwanis Key Leader Event registration for 2027 will reopen next January, 2027. Chaperones and Student Facilitators will be recruited first, then students from last year will be invited to return and new students will be invited to attend.

Our event for next spring will be held on April 23-25, 2027, beginning



with registration check-in on April 23, 2027 from 4-6pm, and our event ending on Sunday, April 25, 2027 at noon at Lakeshore Camp and Retreat.

We like to encourage freshmen, sophomores and juniors to attend, so that they will be eligible to return another time to serve as Student Facilitators. If you are interested in

becoming a chaperone, please let me know. There is no cost for chaperones other than the cost for a background check through Kiwanis International which costs \$35.00 and is good for two years. You also must take three on-line courses prior to attending. If you would just like to visit for a few hours, but not stay over night, you are most welcome to do that without a background check.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your support of Key Leader!

Sincerely,

Linda Ramsey

mramsey2@utm.edu

(731) 225-7729



New Year, New PDO

By Ralph Carter, PDO Organization Chair

Another administrative year has begun, and it's "Boots on the Ground" with Governor Dozier. You may be thinking... "I've already served my time as an officer in the District" or "I've already been there, done that, and got the t-shirt." So how does the Past District Officers (PDO) organization fit into this plan of attack?

Well, as a seasoned Kiwanian who has served a "tour of duty" and service in District leadership, you are the most knowledgeable in all things Kiwanis. We need YOU to help the PDO by being a resource. We need YOU to help develop new leaders in our District. One of the purposes of PDO is to "prepare Kiwanians to serve as District officers."

You are an ambassador for Kiwanis and a trusted mentor to those stepping into leadership for the very first time. While Governor Dozier's leadership team hits the field, our experienced members serve as navigators—the ones who know the terrain, understand the bylaws, and have overcome the exact hurdles today's club and division leaders face.

Being an active part of the PDO doesn't mean taking on a demanding second term. It means stepping up in focused, impactful ways:



CONNECT WITH YOUR LOCAL LEADERSHIP:

Reach out and get to know the Lieutenant Governors in your Division and Region. Introduce yourself, let them know you're in their corner, and offer an open door whenever they need a sounding board.

SHARE INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE:

Help clubs navigate traditions, membership recruitment, and service projects with practical, field-tested advice.

ENCOURAGE FUTURE LEADERS:

Spot promising, enthusiastic members in your home club (or another club) and encourage them to take their first steps toward District service.

LEADERSHIP UPDATES & IMPORTANT DATES:

Regional Executive Committee Representatives:

We are pleased to announce that our PDO Executive Committee representative positions have now been filled for each region across the District! Representatives, please keep an eye on your inbox—a date for an upcoming virtual meeting will be announced shortly to align our plans for the year.

Save the Date Mid-Year Gathering:

Mark your calendars now for our next in-person PDO gathering at the Mid-Year Education Conference on March 20, 2027, in Baton Rouge, LA. We look forward to gathering in fellowship and sharing ideas to strengthen our District.

Governor Dozier's "Boots on the Ground" team can cover plenty of ground, but they can move faster and go farther with experienced leaders walking right beside them. Let's put our experience into action and make this one of LaMissTenn's finest years yet!



Aspire to Inspire:

LUB DUB, LUB DUB, LUB DUB

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



Lub Dub is the sound of your heart valves closing. The trained ear of a physician can diagnose many conditions of the heart just from listening to your heart sounds with a stethoscope. That is physical and scientific knowledge. What the stethoscope and a trained ear cannot determine are the philosophical aspects of your "heart."

Do you have a "big heart" and a "heart of gold?" Do you have a "good heart" or a "heart of stone?" Are you "faint of heart" or a "lion heart?" The metaphors and idioms are almost endless.

There are many works of literature that have 'heart' in the title. The

lyrics of multiple songs feature the heart and many should be familiar to you: "You Gotta Have Heart" from the Broadway musical "Damn Yankees" in 1955, "Hearts Made of Stone" sung by Elvis Presley and many others, "Heart of My Heart," a barbershop quartet song from 1926, etc.

Let's not forget the heart symbolism of Valentine's Day and "affairs of the heart." The heart means love whether it is on a simple card or is the shape of a large red box of chocolates.... all intended to "pour one's heart out."

The Kiwanis Heart. Our "improving the world one child and one community at a time" is "all heart."

We recite it in unison because we know it "by heart." Helping children comes "from the bottom of your heart." A Kiwanis Moment usually "melts your heart" and "warms the cockles of your heart." Breathes there a Kiwanian whose soul is so dead that altruism is not "at heart?"

There are many reasons that our members join Kiwanis but the major one is that their "heart is in the right place." Kiwanians want to help children. That is the Heartbeat of Kiwanis.

We are charging into our new Kiwanis year with heartbreaking speed. Our new officers have heartfelt intentions to be good leaders, to get to the heart of the matter and lead with all their hearts. Kiwanians want to gladden the hearts of children and encourage their success in life. We can do that by working from the heart.

So, don't lose heart. Roll up your sleeves and put your heart into it. Lub Dub, the beat goes on the beat of your Kiwanis Heart as you take heart with renewed energy. Lub Dub.



the Kiwanis® POSSIBILITY PROJECT



Happy Kiwanis New Year from the Children's Fund

By Lenny Simmons, Kiwanis Children's Fund District Chair

Since the beginning of The Possibility Project (TPP) campaign on October 1, 2024, Kiwanis Clubs and members worldwide have made commitments of gifts and pledges of \$12,191,924 which is 48.8% towards our goal of \$25,000,000! In our District, 74% of our Kiwanis Clubs and members have made gifts and pledges in the amount of \$291,759 to support the Children's Fund's newest service campaign. For the 2025-26 administrative year, Clubs and members have contributed \$60,501. Thank all of you for your generous support! The top Clubs in our LaMissTenn District making gifts and pledges for the TPP are: New Orleans (\$36,312), Martin (\$16,677), Tupelo (\$12,439), Dawn Busters, Metairie (\$11,725), Baton Rouge (\$8,245), Lafayette (\$7,870), Vicksburg (\$6,415), Southwest Louisiana (\$5,400), Ponchatoula (\$4,180), East St. Mary (\$3,410) and Pontchartrain (\$3,185).

I want to remind you about the Children's Fund grant programs for 2026-27. The Club Grant Program will have two cycles this year. For the March 1st funding cycle, your club must submit a letter of inquiry any time before November 1, 2026 and if approved, your club must submit the full application by January 1, 2027. For the August 1st funding cycle, the letter of inquiry must be submitted any time before April 1, 2027, and if approved, your club must submit the full application by June 1, 2027. The popular Microgrant Program will also continue again this year. These grants are for Kiwanis Clubs with 35 or fewer members and are in good standing with Kiwanis International and the Kiwanis Children's Fund. Clubs may apply for grants between \$250 and \$1,000 between October 1, 2026 and July 1, 2027. Your project must be a service project enhancing the lives of young children and youth in your community; support a 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. The advantages of the Micro grants are: shorter application, less funding requirement required from other sources, a shorter decision period and faster distribution of funds. Please go to the Kiwanis.org and go to the Kiwanis Children's Fund tab for more information on the club grant and microgrant programs.

Do not forget to include your club's pledge/gift in your budget for 2026-27. Make check payable to:

Kiwanis Children's Fund
P.O Box 6457 – Dept. # 286
Indianapolis, IN 46206.

Online payments: **Kiwanis.org**
(Kiwanis Children's Fund tab)

Happy Kiwanis New Year! And thanks again for Serving the Children of your community and the World!

SAVE THE DATE
JUNE 16-19, 2027



START PLANNING NOW!



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

Hammond Aktion Club's Great Adventure!

By Judy Couvillion, AktionClub Administrator

Sponsorship of the **Hammond Kiwanis Aktion Club** is one of the "gems" of Hammond Kiwanis. Affording adults with disabilities the opportunity to participate in regular meetings and special programs is an honor and a privilege.

The Aktion Club's latest adventure was at Monster Golf. By all accounts, the club members had, "the time of their lives," enjoying the various fun things that are offered at Monster Golf. The games were competitive and the fellowship was exceptional. An emphasis has been made to bring educational programs to Aktion Club meetings but this outing was all about much deserved fun.



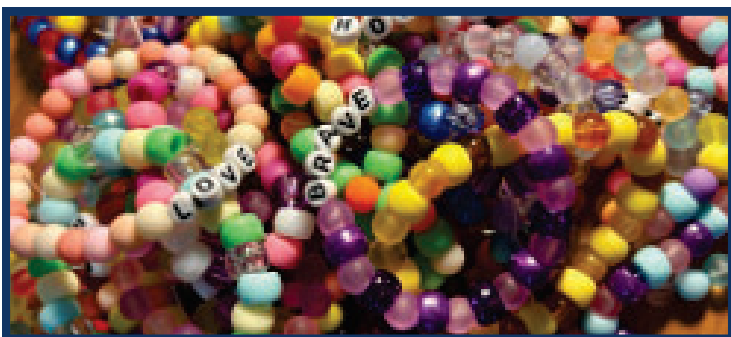
Kiwanis
AKTION CLUB

Circle K in the Spotlight

On March 31st, 2026, the LaMissTenn District became the SECOND provisional district of the service year to ascend back to being a district in good standing! They were formerly led by Dylan Weinrich (2025-26 LaMissTenn CKI Governor) and are currently led by Cecilia Fellner (2026-27 LsaMissTenn CKI Governor).



Nicholls State CKI members were able to make 70 bracelets for the Ronald McDonald House and Hogs for a Cause Center!!



At CKI's International Convention (ICON) this past summer in Dallas, our very own Dylan Weinrich, LaMissTenn CKI Immediate Past Governor was elected to serve as one of five CKI's International Trustees! Congratulations Dylan. We are so proud of you!



Continued on page 30

Circle K in the Spotlight Continued . . .

It is recruitment season time on college campuses! If you have a student in college this year who is wanting to connect with other like minded students who give back to their community and develop leadership skills, this is the place for you.

Pictured are all the clubs in the LaMissTenn District plus some we are working to charter this year. We would love to include you in our Kiwanis family! Don't see your college listed? We're always looking for students interested in bringing CKI to their campus!



Nicholls State University



COMING SOON!



**CKI
WEEK**

CKI Week is coming up in October 12–17, 2026, where members can shine a light on CKI, our service initiatives, and the impact we're making on campus and in our communities! It's a great opportunity to highlight CKI's three tenets (Service, Leadership and Fellowship) while building awareness, earning publicity, and recruiting new members. **CKI WEEK**



Louisiana State University Alexandria Circle K members hosted a recruiting table encouraging new members to join.



University of Tennessee Martin Circle K members who helped with the Martin Kiwanis Club Pancake Day during the Spring semester.



Nicholls State University CKI President leading the first meeting of the Fall semester.

A Message from the Key Club Governor



Hey Kiwanis Family!

My Name is Karmen Cheng, and I am honored to be your 2026-2027 LaMissTenn Key Club Governor! I hope to grow our Key Club district board even more through careful planning and action. I will not only Nourish and Flourish our district board but also our local communities. We will grow like the process of metamorphosis, resulting in beautiful butterflies we can see.

This year's Governor's project is Nourish to Flourish: A Hunger Initiative. The goal is to improve the hunger problem in our local communities. The main project is split into two parts: fundraising and volunteering. We will be partnering with eight food banks fundraising \$900 for each, totaling \$7,200. Each Lieutenant Governor will also be encouraged to hold divisional food drives between the months of December to February.

Key Club International Convention



LaMissTenn District Key Club Board Members and Key Clubbers caravanned to the International Convention in Dallas, TX this past summer along with District Administrator Edith Flores and Assistant District Administrators Wendy Grafton and Jessica Hightower.

Key Club Fall Rallies are off to a Magical Start!

September 12th brought great teamwork to Baton Rouge Magnet High School as **Ascension, Baton Rouge, Cortana, and Red Stick Kiwanis Clubs** partnered to serve lunch at the year's first Key Club Fall Rally, *Where Service Sparks Magic*. Governor Andrew Dozier, Governor-Elect Laura Gilliland, and Region 4 Trustee Jennifer Kelly-White inspired attendees with their support—rolling up their sleeves to serve lunch and pitch in during cleanup.

A total of five rallies will be held this fall. The remaining four will be in Gautier, MS, Thibodaux, LA, Jennings, LA and Memphis, TN. The rallies consist of workshops, keynote speakers, fellowship, fun, and lunch in a pep rally style and are an amazing opportunity for Key Clubbers to meet fellow members in the district.



The first rally raised a significant amount of funds to support the 2026-2027 Key Club Governor's Project, *Nourish to Flourish: A Hunger Initiative*. These contributions will benefit local food banks across the district.



Algiers Kiwanis in Action!

By Linda Leger, Algiers Kiwanis Club

On Saturday, August 22nd, **Algiers Kiwanis** members Pat & Marty Bruce, Linda Leger, Justin Pamplin, Mary DeBlanc, Stephen Mosgrove, Evans Thibodeaux, David & Sue Wadleigh, and Bobbie & David Whiddon set up at a local Rouses Supermarket to collect food items to be donated to the Ronald McDonald House (RMH). The house was not receiving the food as in the past and were in need of items for their resident food pantry. Kiwanians worked in shifts from 9am - 3pm handing out list with items needed. After the day was over 5 buggy loads of groceries (743 items) were collected. Items were separated, boxed, loaded and delivered to the RMH.

Also, on Saturday August 8th, Algiers Kiwanians worked Registration for the New Orleans Red Dress Run. There were over 3,000 participants in the race on this very hot August day. All the funds raised from this event are distributed to all nonprofits that work to make this a success.



Back-to-School Blessings from Ascension Kiwanis

By Donna Leggett, Ascension Kiwanis Club

The Ascension Kiwanis Club was happy to purchase and deliver 96 clear backpacks filled with school supplies to CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) and the Children's Advocacy Center in Ascension Parish.

Both organizations provide advocacy, clinical services, and support for vulnerable children navigating the court and foster care systems. This project was made possible by the generous sponsors of our annual bowling tournament.

Pictured (left to right): Donna Leggett, Ascension Kiwanis Board of Directors; Boni Pater, Ascension Kiwanis Secretary; Troy Pater, Ascension Kiwanis Incoming Treasurer; and Kristin Rosendale, Ascension Kiwanis President; Codie Witmer, CASA Recruiter; and Avah Videgaray, Advocacy Supervisor.



Division 12 Rallies for All-Inclusive Playground

By Amanda Johnson, 2025-2026 Division 12 Lieutenant Governor

Division 12 clubs participated in the fundraising efforts of a million dollar "Let's All Play" Campaign collectively raising \$72,500 in collaboration with Phillips 66 refinery. The playground will be an all-inclusive outdoor playground on the backside of the Children's Museum at Port Wonder. Participating clubs include **Kiwanis Clubs of North Lake Charles, South Lake Charles, Lake Charles and Southwest Louisiana** respectively.



Big Easy Kiwanis Celebrates Student Success

By Tenaj Wallace, Big Easy Kiwanis Club

Every child deserves to know when they've done something worth celebrating. Recently, **Big Easy Kiwanis** had the privilege of recognizing 50 students from the Leah Chase School who earned high scores on their benchmark assessments. Their reward was a special luncheon at Dooky Chase's Restaurant, where they shared a meal, participated in an etiquette presentation, and spent an afternoon celebrating an accomplishment they had worked hard to earn.

Watching the students laugh, ask questions, and enjoy the experience was a reminder that recognition matters. We spend so much time asking young people to work harder, study more, and aim higher. Sometimes they also need to hear, "You did it. We're proud of you."

That's what made the afternoon so special. It wasn't just about lunch. It was about taking the time to celebrate perseverance, discipline, and achievement.

One of the things I've come to admire about Big Easy Kiwanis is that our members never seek recognition for themselves. They simply show up for children. This celebration was another example of that quiet commitment to encouraging young people and investing in their future.

Congratulations to these 50 remarkable students. We were honored to celebrate with you, and we can't wait to see what you accomplish next.



Together Making a Difference

By Angel Ivey, Bluff City Kiwanis Club

The Kiwanis Clubs of Bluff City and Millington partnered to help a local family in need.

A message went out after the 6pm news to all members of Bluff City Kiwanis asking what we can do as a club to help a local family in need. The local television station had just reported five children ranging from 2-18 were now living with their aunt and grandmother because their mother had lost her battle with cancer. The club reached out to the family and offered support.

The Kiwanis Club of Bluff City agreed to provide school uniforms and school supplies for the children for the next three years. Members of Bluff City Kiwanis shopped and delivered clothes to the family. While at DCON, members of the Bluff City and Millington Kiwanis Clubs worked collectively to provide financial resources for the family.

Together, the clubs went back to the family and presented additional resources. Since DCON, Bluff City Kiwanis has provided clothes, food, and other resources the family has needed.

The local CBS station covered the partnership between the clubs and the family.



Hammond Kiwanis Celebrates Special Birthday

By Judy Couvillion, Hammond Kiwanis Club

At the **Hammond Kiwanis Club's** meeting on August 18, members joined in singing happy birthday to Marty Solis who celebrated his 95th birthday. Having Marty as a member of our club has been pure joy. During his 32 years of membership he has almost never missed a meeting. For many of those years he was always helping with "hands-on" club projects. Marty is always happy to help anyone with something that needs fixing. Marty's smile still lights up the room as it has for these many years. Cheers to many more years with Marty!



Cortana Cares for the Community!

By Wanda Magee, Cortana Kiwanis Club

JAMBALAYA COOK

On Saturday, June 20, 2026, Mount Zion Baptist Church of Scotlandville was the setting for the Fathers on a Mission Event celebrating the important role fathers and father figures play in strengthening families and building stronger communities. Thanks to **Cortana Kiwanis** members Tony & Khaki Pittman, Tommy Mackey, and Jeff Wittenbrink for braving the rain downpour and preparing approximately 250 servings of jambalaya. Also on hand were Jim & JoEllen Frederick, Troy Pater, Mike Baldwin & Grandkids and **Ascension Kiwanis** members Randy & Jennifer Pistorius.



BROADMOOR ELEMENTARY

Cortana Kiwanis members showed their generosity by donating school supplies for Broadmoor Elementary School. Chuck, Heather, Pam & Wanda delivered the donated supplies and a check for \$500 from the Cortana Community Service account to purchase additional supplies as needed.

Several club members also volunteered to be First Day Helpers at Broadmoor Elementary School on Thursday, August 6, 2026. We love our “Little Bucs” and wish them a happy, successful school year.



COMMUNITY SERVICE

Braveheart - Cortana members Susie, Michelle, Keith, Tammy, and Mike went to the Braveheart warehouse to unload, stock shelves, and wrap Christmas gifts for children in foster care. They also presented a check for \$500 to enable the purchase of backpacks and supplies. Cortana Kiwanis donated 15 Chromebooks to support kids transitioning out.



Dream Day Foundation for St.

Jude - Cortana’s Community Service Committee was provided with an Amazon wish list of items the clinic needs. We donated \$475 of art supplies, fidget toys, books and play dough themed toys to the clinic.

LSU Tailored Tiger Professional Clothing Closet - The Tailored Tiger Professional Clothing Closet at LSU provides free, gently used professional clothing to current LSU students preparing for graduation or interviews. Donations from Cortana Kiwanis have left the closet fully stocked heading into the fall semester and is well positioned for the upcoming Career Expo.



IRIS - Michelle White and Tammy McDavid presented \$500 from the Cortana Kiwanis Project Committee to IRIS for back-to-school supplies and uniforms. IRIS serves 9 parishes, covering a population of over 800,000 people, making it the largest domestic violence shelter organization in Louisiana and potentially the nation.

52 Years of Golf, Fellowship and Service!

By Lenorah Durel, Dawn Busters Kiwanis Club

The Dawn Busters of Metairie celebrated a special milestone this year with our 52nd Golf Tournament and 6th Annual Sonny Romero Memorial Golf Classic. It also marked our 11th year at Lakewood Golf and Country Club, the original home of the PGA in Louisiana.

After more than five decades, this tournament continues to be one of Dawn Busters' biggest traditions—not simply because of the golf, but because of the incredible participation of our members, volunteers and community partners.

This year's tournament brought together a full field of players along with at least 100 volunteers throughout the day. For those of us who are Kiwanians, that number tells an important part of the story. This is where Dawn Busters members are at their best: working side by side, pitching in wherever needed and making sure everyone who attends feels welcome.

Our golfers were well taken care of, too. Each received two ditty bags stuffed with goodies, and thanks to the generosity of more than 20 local restaurants and chefs, there was plenty of food throughout the day—from breakfast through dinner. Nearly



everything that made the day special was made possible through donations and the generosity of people and businesses who believe in what Dawn Busters does.

The tournament has also become a wonderful opportunity for Kiwanis fellowship. Members have a chance to visit with old friends, meet new people, network with local businesses, introduce potential members to our club and share the Kiwanis mission with people who may be learning about us for the first time.

But the most important part of our golf tournament begins after the last golfer has gone home. One hundred percent of the profits from the tournament are returned to our community through Dawn Busters service projects. The funds we



raise help us support children and families, provide scholarships and educational opportunities, partner with local schools and youth organizations, host community events such as our holiday activities for children, and respond to needs throughout our community.

For 52 years, generations of Dawn Busters have kept this tournament going. The faces may change and the projects we support may grow, but the purpose remains the same: bringing people together so that we can do more for the children and communities we serve.

That is what makes the Sonny Romero Memorial Golf Classic so important to our club. It's a day of golf, food, friendship and fellowship—but ultimately, it's another way for Dawn Busters to fulfill the reason we became Kiwanians in the first place. Kids Need Kiwanis—and Dawn Busters is proud to answer the call.



From Cool Drinks to Saving Lives: Greenville Kiwanis Cares

By Angela Crooms, Greenville Kiwanis Club



The Kiwanis Club of Greenville began the month of July with “Cool Kiwanis,” a special initiative focused on supporting the health and well-being of student-athletes in our community. On July 30, 2026 members delivered Gatorade to the athletic programs at O’Bannon High School in the Western Line School District and Washington School. Through this simple yet meaningful gesture, Kiwanis demonstrated its commitment to keeping our students hydrated, healthy, and ready to perform at their best. It was another opportunity for our club to show that we care about our children and their well-being.

In August, the members learned about the critical blood shortage being experienced by Delta Health System. Board member Iris Stacker helped bring our club together with the Rotary Club of Greenville to support this important community need.

Kiwanis members answered the call on September 1, 2026 by rolling up their sleeves and donating blood to help strengthen the local blood supply. This partnership demonstrated the power of community organizations working together to make a difference.

From supporting our student-athletes to helping save lives, the Kiwanis Club of Greenville continues to live out its mission to improve the world, one child and one community at a time.



'Ween Dream . . . Letting Imaginations Run Wild

By Cathy Simmons, New Orleans Kiwanis Club



For the last 5 years, the **Kiwanis Club of New Orleans** has been working with 'WEEN DREAM, an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit that gives free Halloween costumes to children in need across America. This is their busiest time of the year! Fulfillment is underway, and their Director, Toni Shirley, just told us they have reached their 2,000th costume order for the year!

A child is a 'WEENSTER if they:

- have special needs, physical and/or mental disabilities
- are in the foster care system, homeless, or reside at a shelter
- are living at or below the poverty line or in low-income housing
- are living with serious medical issues
- and those who have experienced a recent trauma/natural disaster

Members of the Kiwanis Club of New Orleans work most Saturdays throughout the year, sorting costumes by characters and sizes. In September, we work to fill the myriad of orders for families across America.

This has been our club's signature service project for the last 2 years, and in the 2024-2025 Kiwanis Year was named to represent the LaMissTenn District, for Kiwanis International Signature Project Contest. We made it to the top 10 finalist for small clubs for the International Convention in Pittsburgh! Although we didn't place in the top 3, we are proud of our efforts to let kids' imagination run wild as they role play for Halloween and beyond!

'WEEN DREAM, Director Toni first joined our club as a corporate

member through her work as a Banker. The next year, in October of 2022, Toni joined as an individual member and in 3 weeks, will be installed as our Club President-Elect, to serve as Club President in the 2027-2028 Kiwanis Admin year. She has spoken to several clubs in the New Orleans area about 'WEEN DREAM, and is extending that invitation to the rest of the district, via zoom presentation.

Kiwanis Club of New Orleans is assisting 'WEEN DREAM collect costumes that are gently used or new, for all sizes (infants to adults), and are asking you and your club to help us, help them! Check out their website (www.weendream.org) for more information and to find out how to donate costumes!



Northeast Shelby County: What Kiwanis is All About!

By Wendy Fortner, Northeast Shelby County Kiwanis Club

The Northeast Shelby County Kiwanis Club was proud to serve our community with a pancake breakfast following the Arlington 5K on Saturday, September 12, 2026. After runners and walkers crossed the finish line, they were welcomed with hot pancakes, sausage, and plenty of smiling faces.

The breakfast was made possible by a wonderful group of volunteers who gave their time to cook, serve, clean up, and make sure everyone felt welcome. It was a great example of the community spirit that makes Arlington such a special place.

We were also excited to have Princesses for Patients, a club from Arlington High School, join us for the morning. The princesses were a huge hit with the children, posing for photos and spreading sunshine and bubbles throughout the event.

The Northeast Shelby County Kiwanis Club is dedicated to serving children and strengthening our community. We are grateful to our volunteers, Princesses for Patients, and everyone who joined us for breakfast and helped make the morning such a success!

Good food, great volunteers, happy children, and a community coming together—that's what Kiwanis is all about.



Opelousas Kiwanis: Serving Our Community One Meal at a Time

By Carrie Richard, Opelousas Kiwanis Club

On June 26, 2026, the **Opelousas Kiwanis Club** proudly hosted its 4th Annual BBQ Fundraiser, continuing a tradition of bringing our community together while raising funds to support the children and families we serve throughout St. Landry Parish.

For the past three years, our signature meal featured delicious pork steaks, rice dressing, baked beans, and a slice of bread. This year, we decided to try something new by offering sausage po'boy meals complete with chips and a drink for just \$10. The response from our community exceeded every expectation. We proudly sold 650 sausage po'boy meals, raising more than \$6,500 to benefit the Opelousas Kiwanis Club's service projects and programs.

This fundraiser would not have been possible without the incredible generosity and support of our community partners. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Sheriff Bobby Guidroz and the St. Landry Parish Sheriff's Department for once again providing the BBQ pit that helped make this event a success. We are equally grateful to Pastor Clarence Lazard and our nonprofit partner, Dads and Kids, for providing the use of their pit and for personally helping prepare and cook the meals.

The true heart of this event was the dedication of our volunteers. Twenty-one members of the Opelousas Kiwanis Club generously gave their time by cooking, assembling, packaging, and delivering meals throughout the community.



Their teamwork, commitment, and servant leadership exemplify what Kiwanis stands for—improving the world one child and one community at a time.

Our mission extends beyond fundraising. We believe in serving those who need us most. At the conclusion of the fundraiser, we were honored to donate approximately 40 sausage po'boy meals to The Giving Fridge and Pantry, helping provide nourishment to individuals experiencing homelessness and food insecurity within our community. This act of giving reflects our belief that no effort is too small when it comes to caring for our neighbors.

The success of our 4th Annual BBQ Fundraiser is a testament to what can be accomplished when businesses, community leaders,

nonprofit organizations, and dedicated volunteers unite for a common purpose. Every meal purchased, every donation received, and every volunteer hour contributed helps strengthen our ability to continue serving the youth of Opelousas and St. Landry Parish through scholarships, leadership programs, literacy initiatives, and other community service projects.

The Opelousas Kiwanis Club sincerely thanks everyone who purchased a meal, made a donation, volunteered their time, or supported this year's fundraiser in any way.

Together, we are building a stronger, more compassionate Opelousas—one meal, one project, and one act of kindness at a time.

A Day of Service, Fellowship, and Community Spirit

By Carrie Richard, Opelousas Kiwanis Club

On August 15, 2026, the **Opelousas Kiwanis Club** proudly hosted its 6th Annual Co-Ed Softball Tournament at Opelousas South City Park. Although the tournament faced several challenges, particularly with the weather, the Kiwanis Club remained determined to continue this annual tradition. The event had to be rescheduled three times, but the club's persistence and commitment ultimately paid off. The tournament provided an opportunity for families, friends, businesses, and community organizations to come together for a day filled with competition, fellowship, entertainment, and fun.

The softball tournament was originally scheduled to take place in conjunction with the club's 3rd Annual Anything Over Rice Cook-Off, 1st Annual Kruisin' for Kiwanis Kids Classic Car Show, and free bingo. Those events were held on May 30, 2026, while the softball tournament was rescheduled for August. Despite the changes, the spirit of the events remained the same: bringing the community together while supporting the Opelousas Kiwanis Club and its service projects.

This year's softball tournament featured six co-ed teams. Three teams represented valued corporate sponsors of the Opelousas Kiwanis Club: American Bank and Trust Company, Dupre Carrier Godchaux, and St. Landry Bank & Trust Co. The tournament also welcomed three community-based teams: 27th JDC, Hope for Opelousas, and Pitch Slapped. Hope for Opelousas is a nonprofit organization and long-standing partner of the Kiwanis Club

through its Kiwanis Kids Signature Project. Pitch Slapped was a new team that joined the tournament this year, adding even more excitement to the competition.

The tournament was filled with spirited competition and friendly camaraderie. Players and spectators enjoyed a day of softball while supporting one another and celebrating community involvement. The competition ultimately ended with 27th JDC claiming the championship title. In addition to the softball games, the tournament featured a fun beer drinking contest, which was won by American Bank. We also held a 50/50 Raffle and Alonzo Ned was our winner of the raffle. Live music from local talent Mr. Alton Celestine added to the atmosphere and helped make the day even more enjoyable for everyone in attendance.



The success of the tournament would not have been possible without the generosity and support of many community partners. The Opelousas Kiwanis Club extends its sincere appreciation to the City of Opelousas for donating the use of the Teen Civic Center for the free bingo and baseball field. We are very thankful for the continued sport of Mr. Gary Vidrine and Mr. Len Champagne, who generously volunteered their time to serve as umpires. Their contributions helped ensure that the tournament ran smoothly and successfully.



Ponchatoula Kiwanis Honors Member

By Judy Couvillion, Hammond Kiwanis Club

Visitors to the historic Kiwanis Log Cabin are now greeted by a heavy, wrought-iron bench that memorializes the late Anthony “Mutts” Berner who, for many years was a leading local businessman, civic leader and a member of the **Ponchatoula Kiwanis Club** for 56 years.

The bench was donated by the Ponchatoula Kiwanis Club in recognition and appreciation for Berner’s many years of service to the organization and the community.

The bench, which bears a plaque marking Berner’s contributions to the club, was recently installed and members of his family gathered on Aug. 18 to dedicate the bench and reminisce about Berner, also known as “Tony” by his many friends and family, for his dedication to community, family and Kiwanis.

Berner, who passed away at age 94 in May 2024, served as the Ponchatoula Kiwanis Club President for three terms and was Lieutenant Governor of Division 13 of the LaMissTenn District of Kiwanis International for one term.

During his many years of Kiwanis membership, Berner participated in community enhancement projects and activities pursued by the club. He was among the original group that started a booth at the annual Ponchatoula Strawberry Festival and continued to be involved in the festival for many years.

The Kiwanis Log Cabin was always a special place for Berner who was among the club leaders who played a role in rebuilding the current structure on the site of the original log cabin that needed replacement.



Gathered to pay tribute to the memory of the late Anthony “Tony” Berner on the memorial bench honoring his contributions to the Ponchatoula Kiwanis Club and community, from left, were Berner’s grandson, Corey Berner, “Tony’s” son Michael Berner and wife Robin, granddaughter Megan Berner Crowe holding her son Cooper Crowe, and his grandson Brad Berner.

Berner had a special chair in the Log Cabin for the weekly Wednesday Kiwanis meetings and all members knew that his “spot” was to be left open awaiting his arrival. Activities at the Log Cabin always drew his interest and he was there for regular meetings, board of director gatherings, pancake breakfasts, Teacher Appreciation breakfasts, back-to-school projects and the many other community related activities sponsored by the Kiwanis Club.

Berner was a native of Ponchatoula, born on a strawberry farm on Wineberger Road. His father, Emile Berner, passed away when he was only an infant and he was reared by his mother, Ethel Berner, along with his siblings Edwin (Buddy), Emile Jr. (Jake) and Juanita “Weetsie” Berner Blaise. The members of the family grew up knowing

what hard work was all about and all eventually pursued productive lives, especially “Tony” Berner.

After service in the U.S. Army near the end of World War II Berner returned to Ponchatoula and started a frozen food distribution business selling products out of the trunk of his car. His business matured over the years into Pon Foods, a huge, thriving firm that distributed a wide variety of products to schools, prisons, restaurants and catering services throughout a multi-state area. Over the years, Pon Foods provided employment to dozens of area residents.

Berner’s dedication to Kiwanis extended to his family. His sons Anthony “Mutt” Berner Jr. and Michael Berner both served as presidents of the Ponchatoula Kiwanis Club, and several of his grandchildren were members of the club at one time or another. One niece, Rose Anne Blaise Husser, was an officer in the Ponchatoula Club and a second niece, Judy Blaise Couvillion, held numerous offices in the Hammond Kiwanis Club and was a Lieutenant Governor and Trustee of the LaMissTenn District of Kiwanis International.

At the bench dedication, Michael Berner observed, “Daddy would be very proud of this expression of appreciation by members of the Ponchatoula Kiwanis Club. Some of his most special memories took place in this historic building in his beloved Ponchatoula, and he would be most pleased to know that his name will be in the front of this building for which he cared so much. Visitors who see his name will know just how much he meant to Kiwanis and the people of Ponchatoula who were all so special to him.”

Pontchartrain Kiwanis Kicks off the New School Year!

By Myra Lewis, Pontchartrain Kiwanis Club

Kiwanis Club of Pontchartrain members gathered to assemble 200 pencil cases for distribution to students at local elementary and middle schools (Schaumburg, Esperanza and St. Mary's). The pencil cases were zippered, transparent and Kiwanis-branded and contained items to facilitate student learning such as pencils, pens, crayons, markers, erasers, highlighters, pencil sharpeners, bookmarks and rulers.



Assembling pencil cases around Deidre Charlott's dining table for local students are Shelia Bailey, Phyllis Kirksey, Petrina McMorris, Myra Lewis, Ellen Robinson and Judy Wallace.

New Student Member Stocks Little Free Library

*By Myra Lewis,
Pontchartrain Kiwanis Club*



Kairie Magee was a St. Mary's Key Club member who graduated in May 2025. Because of her outstanding service and academic excellence as a Key Club member, the Kiwanis Club of Pontchartrain conferred a Jonathan Louis Award upon her as she entered her first year at LSU's Baton Rouge campus, majoring in Performance Theater with a minor in Business Administration. Kairie received her award at the club's 2024-25 Installation Banquet at the end of that service year. At that event, Kairie expressed her interest in becoming a club member.

Kairie is now starting her second year at LSU. Kiwanis Pontchartrain members voted

Kairie into the club as its first student member. She will be presented with her Kiwanis membership pin at the 2026-2027 Installation Brunch to be held at Café Hope on November 21, 2026.

This past summer, Kairie served as an intern at St. Thomas Community Center and expanded her role by helping with several initiatives. She undertook a book drive and successfully collected three hundred fifty-nine books, some of which will stock a newly purchased Little Free Library to be chartered by Kiwanis Pontchartrain.

The photo shows Kairie with some of the books she collected for the Little Free Library.

St. Bernard-Arabi Kiwanis: Imagination Library Celebration

By Carol Saling, St. Bernard-Arabi Kiwanis Club

On a Sunday afternoon in August, the **Kiwanis Club of St Bernard-Arabi** celebrated the achievements of 80 of St. Bernard Parish's youngest readers. The children, who aged out of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program, were treated to an afternoon of fun and games. Each participant received a goodie bag, school supplies and a certificate of completion. Also, the kids were able to make bookmarks & decorate photo frames.

Mother Goose was on site reading to the kids as they received a book of their choosing. While the children were hanging out at Docville Farm there were delicious hot dogs and chips to enjoy long with yummy lemonade and sweet tea donated by our local Canes.

With over 800 children now receiving books from the program, the Ready of Reading Committee of Kiwanis is looking forward to many Next Chapter Celebrations in the future. The Imagination Library in St Bernard Parish is made possible through the support of our local partners, the Meraux Foundation and Chalmette Refining.



Kiwanis Club of Twin Cities Supports Students

By Jake Clapper, Twin Cities Kiwanis Club

The Kiwanis Club of the Twin Cities is proud to announce that, through a generous grant from the LaMissTenn Foundation, we were able to provide school supplies for every student at South Fulton Elementary School in grades Kindergarten through 5th grade.

As a club dedicated to serving children and strengthening our community, we recognized the financial pressure that comes with preparing for a new school year. With the rising cost of groceries, household expenses, and everyday necessities, purchasing school supplies can place an additional burden on families.

Our goal was to help relieve some of that financial stress while ensuring that every student returned to school with the supplies they needed to begin the year prepared and ready to learn.

We are incredibly grateful to the LaMissTenn Foundation for partnering with the Kiwanis Club of the Twin Cities and investing in the students and families of our community. We are proud to serve South Fulton Elementary and look forward to continuing to build partnerships that support our local schools and, most importantly, our children.



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:

January 2027 Issue = Deadline December 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"
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of Kiwanis International.

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