

WINTER 2019

The Commentator

A PUBLICATION OF THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF ABILENE



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ABILENE



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The Junior League of Abilene is an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, to developing the potential of women, and to improving the community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers.

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A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR DONORS:

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Hours of Operation

Monday, Wednesday
12 p.m.— 5 p.m.


Office Manager


Nancy Allen


Let's Get Social

Follow us on social media to stay connected with what is happening in the Junior League of Abilene!

 Junior League of Abilene

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Junior League of Abilene

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Welcome

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



As I planned for this year, I kept one thing at the front of my mind; the importance of our League's responsibility to continue building upon the foundation laid by all the women who came before us. You can look around Abilene and see their footprints on places like the NCCIL, The Grace Children's Museum, West Texas Rehab, Fort Imagination, Ben Rich-ey Boy's Ranch, the League House at Hendrick, and so many other organizations that exist thanks to the work of the Junior League of Abilene.

Much of last year was spent researching and reviewing our Community Impact Transformation; which is a new model Junior Leagues across the world are using to identify and tackle the biggest issues facing their communities. We spent countless hours delving into community assessments, statistics, and having important conversations with our community partners. Our conclusion was clear, children in poverty need our help now more than ever.

As we embark on our first year with a new community impact

statement, focusing on food insecurity, health, hygiene and basic needs for impoverished children right here in Abilene, I hope that we can think as boldly as those who helped bring these organizations to life.

We are excited to announce that we have already begun work on our newest project partnering with the AISD Homeless Liaison.

It is going to be another great year in the Junior League of Abilene, as we welcome one of our largest provisional classes ever. These ladies are ready to join our Active and Sustaining Members as we continue our commitment to helping the children of Abilene. On behalf of all the members of the Junior League of Abilene, thank you for your continued support of our mission!

Amy Carnes

President, Junior League of Abilene



EDITORS' NOTE

This year our League has seen tremendous growth. We have expanded our numbers with our largest Provisional class and we have grown our stewardship by implementing a new Community Impact Model. This Community Impact Model will be our roadmap to delivering Junior League's mission to Abilene. We are eager to share these amazing stories with you.

Elizabeth McAnally & Jyl Schoen

PR & Commentator Co-Chairs, Junior League of Abilene

Community Impact

HOMELESS YOUTH LIAISON PROJECT

In June 2017, the Junior League of Abilene's board recognized how the community had drastically changed over the years. Due to the city's growth, the JLA could no longer meet the level of needs to protect the children nor continue advocating for the families. In the Fall of 2017, the Board approved and implemented the "Community Impact Model," created by AJLI, to reassess JLA's outreach efforts as it related to current community needs.

Amy Carnes, President of JLA, explains, "Deciding to transition into the Community Impact Model was both an easy, yet incredibly difficult decision. On the one hand, we all have a huge stake in our current projects and are hesitant to change a project that we have literally put our blood, sweat and tears into. On the other hand, we all want to make the biggest impact possible on those who need it the most in Abilene. The Community Impact Model is not about choosing only one issue to focus on and ignoring the rest; it's about defining our impact based on current needs, contextualizing our work, and acknowledging our capacity to do the work. This new model does not ignore our mission that the Junior League is committed to developing the potential of women. In fact, this model gives us the opportunity to learn how to truly become champions for children living in poverty right here in our backyards and affect real change in our community."

With a refreshed vision, the Junior League of Abilene focuses on advocating and providing basic resources for our community's children in poverty, specifically those who are homeless and/or under the care of Child Protective Services. When basic resources are not available and basic needs cannot be met, children have no foundation for learning and growth. Our League provides basic resources in three specific areas where we can make the most impact: **Food Insecurity Resources**, **Health & Hygiene Resources**, and **Clothing & Other Necessary Resources**.

Through this new community impact commitment statement, we created something new: the **AISD Homeless Youth Program (HYP)**. We hope to help Darrin Cox, the AISD Homeless Liaison, organize, manage, and more effectively meet the needs of the homeless youth community. This is still a developing program and will take the help of all members to make this the successful program we know it can be.

Written by Taylor Tomanka



WHO'S WHO

1. Tifani Smith & Tabitha Coffman with kids help organize at HYP.
2. A tower of handmade blankets to keep HYP kids warm this winter.
3. Brittany Brown, Timber Barkley, & Emerald Cassidy show off their handy work.
4. Darrin Cox, AISD Homeless Liaison.
5. Taylor Tomanka shopping for HYP supplies and essentials.

AREAS OF GREATEST NEED

Data from Henderick Medical Center's 2018 Community Health Needs Assessment

Community impact is the lasting result of initiatives that enhance people's quality of life through improvements in conditions and environments that affect how people live, work and play.

HOMELESS YOUTH

10% of Taylor county's adolescent population are homeless or unaccompanied living in either temporary housing with relatives, in hotels, shelters, or a car on the street. Some without any adult supervision.



GENERATIONAL POVERTY

Poverty creates barriers to opportunities in education, health care, and basic needs, it can capture a family for generations. Taylor county has **18.05%** poverty level which is 3% over the national level.



FOOD INSECURITY

Food insecurity focuses on the availability of grocery stores to children. At a rate of 1 per 100,000 people, Taylor county has a rate of **10.65**, which is half the national average.



ABUSED CHILDREN

Foster homes are in shortage with **246 children** begin sent out of the county due to the lack of foster homes available in Taylor county.



We are committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women and improving Abilene through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Therefore, League projects should fully utilize the capabilities of these trained volunteers by producing positive, long-lasting effects on the individuals who participate in or served and on the wider community.

The Team

LEAGUE LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Front, L-R:

President-Elect.....Taylor Tomanka
President.....Amy Carnes
President-Elect-Elect.....Belinda Southall
Secretary.....Elyse Lewis

Back, L-R:

Communications Director
& New Members.....Emerald Cassidy
Membership Development Director.....Kristie McBayer
Treasurer/Finance Director.....Elizabeth Miller
Community Director.....Ashley Hall

Not pictured:

Diversity & Education Director.....Panya Bender
Immediate Past President.....Kristina Campos-Davis
Sustaining Director.....Jackie Love
Carousel ChairMandy Ott

COMMITTEE & PROJECT CHAIRS

Arrangements.....Kyla Hale
BackpacksBria Varner & Bridgette Camarillo
C.A.L.F.Amy Gonzales & Ashley Hurley
Community PartnersKenna Hogan & Melissa Strain
Education & TrainingTiffany Davis
HeadquartersCarly Etter
Homeless YouthTaylor Tomanka & Mandy Ott
Junior LeadersSara McBeth & Tabitha Coffman
Kids in the KitchenTracy Gates
Kids in the Kitchen ResearchRachel Harred
PAVEKaty McReynolds & EJ Jessup
PR & CommentatorElizabeth McAnally & Jyl Schoen
Suds BudsBelinda Southall

Say Cheese

AROUND THE COMMUNITY



WHO'S WHO

1. Several League members volunteer at the Sisters' First Dinner, 2. Last year's Provisional class celebrated with a summer river trip, 3. Ashley Scott delivers food with Backpacks for Kids, 4. Mandy Ott & Taylor Tamanka having fun at the margarita mixer last summer, 5. Elyse Lewis & Emerald Cassidy, 6. Melissa Yarbrough, Charity Shaver, Jennifer Smothermon, Elizabeth Miller & Glenna Cordray help in Carousel Café, 7. Cindy Ramsey with her little amigo, 8. Ashley Hart, Emerald Cassidy, Kelsey Caprio, Elizabeth McAnally & Emily Jacques at Rhinestone Roundup, 9. Cassidy Sooter, Chephra McKee, Kasey Johnson, Amelia Carnagey & Sarah Thomas at Christmas Carousel, 10. Elf, portrayed by Chelsea Phillips, was very excited to see Abilene Santa. She knows him!, 11. Back L-R Timber Barkley, Jennifer Harrison, Kasey Johnson, Haley Tabor, Kendall Harrison; Front L-R Maggye Sitzes, Chephra McKee, Kacey Stanfield, Ashley Hart, Mandy Ott & Geraldine Wills break down after Christmas

2018 Christmas Carousel Committee



WHO'S WHO Front, L-R: Britt Willis, Asst. Chair-Elect; Christin McClain, Merchants; Precilla Camacho, Events-Preview Party; Jessica Ambrose, Merchants; Sarah McBeth, Café; Haley Tabor, Tickets/T-Shirts; Kendall Harrison, Tickets/T-Shirts; Kacey Stanfield, Marketing; Back, L-R: Casilea Rodriguez, Sponsorships; Heather Henderson, Style Show; Emily Jacques, Style Show; Maggye Sitzes, Decorations; Tiffany Davis, Café; Mandy Ott, Chairman; Michelle Rainwater, Style Show; Jenna Hall, Asst. Chairman; Kasey Johnson, Decorations; Jennifer Harrison, Events-Brunch with Santa; Liz Henderson, Hospitality; Ashely Hart, Decorations. [Not Pictured] Kelsey Caprio, Marketing; Geraldine Wills, Events-Brunch with Santa; Jenna Dozier, Events-Auction & Support; Meghan Martin, Events-Preview Party; Chephra McKee, Decorations.

A Christmas Carousel Thank You

Every year Junior League of Abilene hosts Christmas Carousel to aid in funding the projects and programs near and dear to us. This year was no different and was one of our most successful yet! This year's theme was a fusion of old Hollywood glam and Great Gatsby. The 1920s were all about sophistication and we hosted an event that paralleled the feeling of this era. We brought in a charming new attraction this year, Dueling Pianos, that elevated our Preview Party to the next level! During the many events held that weekend - Preview Party, Style Show and Brunch with Santa - we loved seeing you enjoy the sights, sounds and early shopping that Christmas Carousel brings! My team this year did an outstanding job making sure our fundraiser excelled in ways we had not seen before. Thank you for attending with your best Christmas spirit!



Mandy Ott
2018 Carousel Chairman



On Saturday, Dec. 1, the Provisional class hosted the 4th annual Reindeer Run 5K in downtown Abilene. Historically an event of Christmas Carousel, this year's event coincided with the extended City Sidewalks holiday happenings. More than 250 runners and walkers participated in the race. Registrations from the 5K help fund League projects, programming and events benefiting services helping women and children of the Big Country. Funds from the event in part also allowed for the continued support of the Abilene Downtown Association.

A SPECIAL THANKS to our 5K sponsors: Abilene Christian University, Black Plumbing/Maverick Saw Cutting & Core Drilling, Justice Construction, Inc., Orangetheory, TSTC Abilene, Joe Cook | Abilene Running Company, 10:9 Design, LLC, Ben Fair | A Fair Advantage Self-Defense, Betty Rose's Little Brisket, Edible Arrangements, HUB Transport, Lantrip's Custom Homes, McMurry University, Rockin' R Drilling, Inc., Sockdolager Brewing Company, Abilene Santa, Gary G. Linn DDS, PC, G.M. McCaslin & Co, LMB Real Estate Group, Motion Industries, Risha Sanders | State Farm Insurance, Jan McCaslin | Sendero Properties LLC, TMi Advertising Agency, Veterans Garage Door and Walmart Neighborhood Market.



774 Butternut St. Abilene, TX 79602

SAVE
the
DATE

— ABILENE —
GIVES ★
— MAY 7, 2019 —

Abilene Gives is a 24-hour online giving event to support non-profit organizations in Abilene and the surrounding areas.

Check for upcoming news on how you can provide continued support for the Junior League through a gift in May.