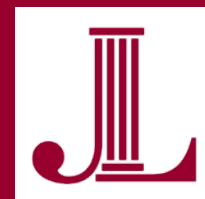


The Commentator

A PUBLICATION OF THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF ABILENE



JUNIOR LEAGUE OF
ABILENE



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.

Table of Contents

SUMMER 2019

- 03** **President's Letter**
Welcome by Taylor Tomanka
- 04** **A Special Thanks**
Highlighting Our Abilene Gives Donors
- 05** **Membership**
Meet Our Newest Active Members
- 11** **Snack Pak 4Kids**
New Name, Same Vision

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR DONORS*:

10:9 Design, LLC | 4B Ranch | A Fair Advantage Self-Defense – Ben Fair | Abilene Ballet | Abilene Christian University | Abilene Cultural Affairs Council | Abilene Interior Design | Abilene Pediatric Dental | Abilene Regional Medical Center | Abilene Running Co. – Joe Cook | Alice Yates | Amy Gonzales | Ben and Elizabeth McAnally | Ben E. Keith | Betty Rose's Little Brisket | Billye Proctor Shaw | Black Plumbing | Maverick Saw Cutting & Core Drilling | Bob and Peggy Beckham | Browning Law Firm, PLLC - Cade and Katie Browning | Carol Chappell | Casilea Rodriguez | Charles Erwin | Chelsea Phillips | Chelsea Rico | Chephra McKee | Cheryl Leonard | Chesley and Meg Martin | Chris and Tera Gibson | Chris Proctor-Cleveland | Christie McAdams Leedy | Cindi Bumann | Cindy Ramsey | Cindy Sheppard | Cornelia Alvarez | Cory Clements | CrossFit Abilene | Crystal Cox | Cynthia Pearson | Daniel and Stephanie Robinson | Daryl and Amy Carnes | David Soto | DC Inspection Services | Dian Graves Owen Foundation | Dixie Bassett | Dodge Jones Foundation | Dr. Eric and Mrs. Sue Schackmuth | Dr. Norm Dozier | Dru Hall | Edible Arrangements | Elizabeth Miller | Erica Jara | Family Vision Associates | Fat Matt Roofing | FDLIC | Fergus & Fergus, L.L.P. | First Financial Bank, N.A. | FOX | Frontier Motors | G.M. McCaslin & Co | Gary G Linn DDS, PC | Gene and Cindy Lantrip | Geraldine and Riley Wills | Gift from the Steve Arthur Family Foundation at the Community Foundation of Abilene | Glen Hall, DDS | Greathouse Foundation | Hickory Street Café | His Little Angels Daycare | HUB Transport | Image Sculptors – Dr. Laura Bennett | Jackie Love | Jama Cadle | Jamie Miers | Jana Moreno | Jason and Ashley Hall | Jason and Emerald Cassidy | Jeremy and Kristie McBrayer | Jessica Varner | Joanna Peacock | Joe and Amanda Biles | John and Amy Milam | Justice Construction, Inc. | Jyl Schoen | Kacey Stanfield | Kay and David Alexander | Kelley Messer | Kelly Moore Paints | Kelsey and Andrew Caprio | Kristina Campos-Davis Ph.D. | KTAB/KRBC/Telemundo | Kyle and Wendy Tamez | Lantrip's Custom Homes | Lawrence Hall - Big Country Chevy Dealer | Leon and Patty Newman | LMB Real Estate Group | Mark and Gina Lewis | Mary Klein | McMurry University | Megan Cheek | Megan Longmire | Megan McCaslin | Melissa Strain | Misti Hauger | Mollie Branch – Emerge EdComm | Motion Industries | Mrs. J Price Brock | Mrs. Sheryl and Dr. Brad Kendrick | Orangetheory Abilene | Patrick and Elyse Lewis | Paula Fiel | Peterson Real Estate | Prosperity Bank | Rhonda Snyder | Riley Branch | Robert and Ellen Knox | Rockin' R Drilling, Inc. | Ruby Jo Day | Russell and Beverly Guthrie | Samantha Adkins | Sarah Elizabeth Thomas | Sendero Properties LLC – Jan McCaslin | Shelly McKee | Shelton Foundation | Sibert Family | Sockdolager Brewing Company | Southall Chiropractic & Acupuncture Clinic – Dr. Belinda Southall | Star Dodge | State Farm Agent – Risha Sanders | Suddenlink Communications | Sylvan Learning Center | Tabitha Coffman | Taylor Tomanka and Martin Fergus | Tiffany Lamb | Tiffany Loftin | Tiffany Smith | Timber Barkley | TMI Advertising Agency | Tonya Harbin - Harbin Properties | TSTC Abilene | United Supermarkets - Market Street | Veterans Garage Door | Walmart Neighborhood Market #5715 | Walmart Store #535 | Walmart Store #536

*as of August 1, 2019

ON COVER:

A group photo of past League Presidents shared in the winning Abilene Gives social media campaign. From L-R, the photo features: Tifani Smith (2015-16), Kristina Davis (2017-18), Angela Tomlin (2014-15), Sheryl Kendrick (2003-04), Glenna Cordray (2013-14), Kari Polk (2010-11), Amy Milam (2012-13), Risha Sanders (2008-09), Taylor Tomanka (2019-20), Belinda Southall (2020-21) and Tiffany Loftin (2021-22).

Hours of Operation


Monday and Wednesday
11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Office Manager

Nancy Allen

Let's Get Social

Follow us on social media to stay connected with the most up-to-date League news. You'll also catch us behind-the-scenes at our different League events!

 Junior League of Abilene

 @jlabilene

 @jlabilene

 @jlabilene

Junior League of Abilene

774 Butternut St
Abilene, TX 79602

o (325) 677-1879

f (325) 677-1870

jrleagueabilene.com

Welcome

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



If women understood and exercised their power they could remake the world. - Emily Taft Douglas

At the annual meeting in May, we graduated 54 new members – our biggest class in a decade! I am thrilled with the results of the hard work our Admissions and New Member Chairs did the past few years in restructuring the class curriculum. The last two Provisional classes have more than doubled our active membership making it possible to expand project and fund development efforts, as well as member training opportunities.

Within Abilene ISD, more than 11,500 children – 72.3% of those enrolled – live at or under the federal poverty guidelines. This is living off less than \$22,500 for a family of three. **Why does this matter to the Junior League?**

- Most children in Taylor County whom are living below the federal poverty guidelines are being raised by a single woman caregiver (~24%)
- More than one in four Texas children (under the age of five) are currently living in poverty, and, in Taylor County, at least one of those four children are being raised by a single woman caregiver

- Women teach what they learn to their children, *especially* their daughters

Educate a man and you educate an individual. Educate a woman and you educate an entire community. This is not just an old adage – it is truth. This year the League will provide more training in meetings, send members to conferences with our international affiliate, provide members with tangible resources, and empower our members to be vulnerable enough for growth. Thus this year our theme is **“Educating, Equipping, & Empowering Women”** to be catalysts for community change.

One person cannot make a huge difference in ending youth homelessness or reducing the amount of children in foster care, but together, our collective voice can. The small spark that starts here within the League can turn into a wildfire if we are brave enough to ignite it. I invite you to join me and look forward to seeing you on September 10th for our first general meeting of the year!

With Love,

Taylor R. Tomanka

2019-20 President, Junior League of Abilene

Abilene Gives

A SPECIAL THANKS

On May 7th, our League members asked you to GIVE. We shared the needs of children in our community - hygiene products, diapers, weekend meals, socks and underwear. We asked you to give to support our mission to change youth homelessness, poverty, and hunger in our community.

After all donations, amplification funds, and prize monies were tallied, we are thrilled to announce that this year's Abilene Gives campaign raised \$9,949.52 for the Junior League of Abilene - more than our first two years participating combined! With these funds, the League can further our impact in the community. Our Suds Buds project received 10 specific donations that will provide additional hygiene kits for students at Abilene ISD's Title 1 campuses. The League's partnership with Abilene ISD's Homeless Youth Ministry received 41 specific



donations, providing much needed female hygiene products, socks and underwear for students served through this initiative. Our Community Partners project received 8 specific donations which will be used to purchase diapers for the CPS Bluebonnet Room, a resource for case workers and foster families during emergency placements.

The League's project Backpacks for Kids (transitioning to Snack Packs 4 Kids this fall) will expand to serve more students through 2 specific donations during Abilene's Day of Giving. This project addresses childhood hunger in our community by providing non-perishable, kid-friendly

weekend meals to Abilene ISD students.

We started the morning bright and early at the Community Foundation's, *Parade of Causes*, event where we were thrilled to learn our Social Media Campaign placed first! Throughout the day, we hosted a progressive watch party, *Eat, Drink, and Be Giving*, at JLA's headquarters.



Probably the most powerful moment of the day occurred during the Junior Leader Jam watch party. We hosted an afterschool watch party just for our Junior Leaders, put out a spread of special snacks and treats, and provided an opportunity for them to thank our donors. Halfway through the party, two siblings asked who they could present their donation to - pulling money from their pockets. Their generosity spread, and before this 1-hour event concluded, our Junior Leaders had contributed over \$50 of their own money toward Abilene Gives.

When we started our Abilene Gives social media campaign in April, our members encouraged you to GIVE - to invest in our mission, to invest in change for the children in our community, to invest in the women of JLA - and GIVE YOU DID! So, thank you, Abilene. Thank you for investing in our vision for the community. Thank you for supporting the women of the Junior League of Abilene.

The impact is greater when #AbileneGives.

Tiffany Loftin

President-Elect-Elect, Junior League of Abilene

Membership

2019 PROVISIONAL CLASS*

It has been a historic time in our League! With a record-breaking class size, we have seen a significant increase in membership. The Association of Junior Leagues International has said, "Junior League women make things happen. They are able to do this because of the skills and experience they obtain through membership." Joining the League means joining a group of women to bring collective community change. It was an honor leading these new members and I am hopeful for the renewed spirit they bring to our League!

Emerald Cassidy

2018-19 New Member Chairman, Junior League of Abilene



KRISTI ALLGOOD

Hometown: Stephenville, TX

"I've learned that I am a strong leader, wife, mother, friend, daughter, and sister that is capable of moving mountains."



CORNELIA ALVAREZ

Hometown: Peoria, IL

"There's more work to be done and issues to be addressed that I'm looking forward to Junior League Abilene being a part of."



TIMBER BARKLEY

Hometown: Gruver, TX

"Altruism has become a key component to my life and joining Junior League aided me in this personal growth. It's an amazing organization."



MIA BARNES

Hometown: Paso Robles, CA

"Finding a place to BOTH give back AND model community connection for my children made League the perfect fit."



MOLLIE BRANCH

Hometown: Hot Springs, AR

"I wanted to find a way to get plugged in and as a result, I now feel like I have an amazing community of women and truly feel like I am at home."



BRITTANY BROWN

Hometown: Abilene, TX

"I love working alongside other like-minded women to create positive change in our local community."



KENDRA CHOWNING

Hometown: Sweetwater, TX

"By joining as a new member, I've learned how involved the Junior League is on our local community."



RONICA COLDIRON

Hometown: Sweetwater, TX

"Since joining Junior League, I've learned how much more I enjoy doing action work."



AMBER COONROD

Hometown: Abilene, TX

"I've learned how much League has benefited our community over the years such as the Bluebonnet Room at CPS."



CRYSTAL COX

Hometown: Abilene, TX

"I have always had compassion for women and children in need and the JLA service projects work to fill those needs."



MATTIE DEVRIES

Hometown: Dublin, TX

"I've discovered how important it is to me that my children see me volunteering and being active in our community."



NICOLE EAVES

Hometown: Abilene, TX

"Since joining I've learned that there are so many people willing to help find solutions to serving those in need."



ALICIA ENGLISH

Hometown: Peoria, IL

"There's more work to be done and issues to be addressed that I'm looking forward to Junior League Abilene being a part of."



SHANNON GANNAWAY

Hometown: Abilene, TX

"One of the reasons I joined League was because I wanted to get into an all-women group to network."



KATE GONZALES

Hometown: Tuscola, TX

"I was amazed to learn the many great non-profits the League has been responsible for starting and maintaining."



MISTI HAUGER

Hometown: Crockett, TX

"Before joining and serving as a volunteer, I was unaware of the amount of food insecurity in Abilene."



DENISE HERNANDEZ

Hometown: San Antonio, TX

"How I serve my community does not always look the same as how others serve, yet we all play an important role in improving our communities."



FELICIA HERNANDEZ

Hometown: Rochester, TX

"I joined the League because I heard of the good that they did for the community and I wanted to be a part."



ESTEFANIA HOBSON

Hometown: Chillicothe, TX

"I've learned so much about the Abilene community. The one thing that was truly eye opening was learning the amount of kids that identify as homeless."



SARAH HOLT

Hometown: Mineral Wells, TX

"Since I am a stay-at-home Mom, attending JLA functions has given me the opportunity to have something outside of my home to call my own."



JUNIOR LEAGUE OF ABILENE

CAMILLA HUNDLEY

Hometown: Vienna, VA

"I joined to get know a new city the best way I know how: by making friends and making an impact on the lives of people through volunteerism."



HILARY INCE

Hometown: Possum Kingdom Lake, TX

"I've learned that I really can become a part of the community in a short time through League, and I'm really enjoying it!"



ASHLEY JACQUES

Hometown: Abilene, TX

"I've made lasting friendships and have challenged myself to adventures that I never would have done before."



ERICA JARA

Hometown: Navarre Beach, FL

"I have learned to share my voice even when I feel a little intimidated and know it is perfectly fine to be different or the same."



MELINDA JORDAN

Hometown: Abilene, TX

"Since joining I've learned that even with as painfully shy and introverted I am, I can still have fun in large groups."



MARY-MELISSA KEIL

Hometown: Aledo, TX

"I love how we can bring our ideas to the table about ways to improve our systems in order to help the community better."



MARY KLEIN

Hometown: Henrietta, TX

"I've gained a community of strong women who care about each other, cheer each other on, and are focused on making Abilene a better place for kids."



HANNAH LANTRIP

Hometown: Abilene, TX

"Since joining League I have learned how to be more open and giving to others. I enjoy serving in the community."



RACHEL LANTRIP

Hometown: Abilene, TX

"I've learned that there are always people who understand what you are going through and build you up with love and encouragement."



MYKAELA LARA

Hometown: Abilene, TX

"Since joining Junior League I've learned what to make a priority and making a positive impact is at the top of my list."



SUZANNE LENHARDT

Hometown: Livonia, MI

"Christmas Carousel has been my favorite project to work on because it brings so many people together like League members, local businesses, and the community."



HAILEY LINN

Hometown: Abilene, TX

"I loved helping with Rhinestone Round Up Derby and having the opportunity to contribute my talents to help raise funds benefiting League projects."



MEGAN LONGMIRE

Hometown: Abilene, TX

"I joined Junior League to gain new friends while also making our community a better place."



WENDY LORENZ

Hometown: Abilene, TX

"I wanted to join League to partner with and share service opportunities giving advantages to our youth and community."



JENNIFER MAHONEY

Hometown: Salt Lake City, UT

"My heart is in feeding those who go hungry, but especially children. I knew by joining that I would have the opportunity to serve in that capacity."



MEGAN MCCASLIN

Hometown: Abilene, TX

"I've learned that I am truly grateful for this little town of Abilene, and want to do whatever I can to make it an even more amazing place to live."



LOLA MCKINDLES

Hometown: Iron Mountain, MI

"There is always something to learn and even the smaller contributions can make a difference."



CRYSTAL MENESES

Hometown: Sweetwater, TX

"I've always wanted to join, but thought I couldn't commit the time. League has been flexible as I commute from Sweetwater to Abilene for meetings."



MALANEY O'CONNELL

Hometown: Crane, TX

"I have learned that so many in our community have the will to serve especially among the membership in League."



RYANN OHNHEISER

Hometown: San Antonio, TX

"I wanted to join League to get involved in the community in a positive way and meet new women with aligning interests."



ANNA PETERS

Hometown: Whittier, CA

"I joined League because my passion in life is giving to others. I love that I can do that alongside other dynamic women!"



JENNIFER PETERSON

Hometown: Abilene, TX

"Being an Abilene native I know a lot, but by joining League it has allowed me to know more about the history of programs we help support."



CHELSEA PHILLIPS

Hometown: Hawley, TX

"It's satisfying to be a part of something bigger than myself. While I may not be the craftiest or most organized, I still have a role in making our community the best it can be."



CHELSEA RICO

Hometown: Abilene, TX

"I am a teacher, so I see the needs of children in our community every day. I wanted to volunteer in different ways than I am able to at school."



STEPHANIE ROBINSON
Hometown: Harker Heights, TX

"It's been great attending and volunteering at the events that support the various nonprofits in Abilene."



KELSEY SCHROEDER
Hometown: Austin, TX

"Junior League has shown me countless ways to make a difference in our town."



CHARITY SHAVER
Hometown: Austin, TX

"Since joining I've learned that I am stronger and have more to offer our community than I originally thought."



CARRIE SMITH
Hometown: Baird, TX

"I have made some amazing friendships, but the real gift has been seeing all of our hard work in the community pay off."



TIFFANY SMITH
Hometown: Hawley, TX

"I've learned, that if I can push my shyness aside, I can accomplish wonderful things for this town with a group of wonderful women."



CASSIDY SOOTER
Hometown: Seminole, TX

"Paying it forward is important to me. I've found strong hearts like mine in JLA with whom I can join forces and make it happen!"



WENDY TAMEZ
Hometown: Houston, TX

"I may not always have all the answers, but I can lean on other strong women in our League for those answers."



SARAH THOMAS
Hometown: Abilene, TX

"I joined Junior League so that I could be a part of helping my community grow and thrive."



ERIKA THORNTON
Hometown: Billings, MT

"I have been looking for a volunteer organization to join for the past few years. When a friend told me about League, I knew it was exactly what I was looking for."



MELISSA YARBROUGH
Hometown: Lawn, TX

"I have learned there are many people and organizations willing to pitch in and help out. And that's where the Junior League plays an important role."

Becoming a member of the Junior League

Prospective member socials kick off the first Sunday in May and then continue to be held throughout the summer. Check our Facebook page for event details!

Contact Jama Cadle, the 2019-20 New Member Chairman, at fryj@acu.edu for more information on membership with the Junior League of Abilene.

JLA Projects

OUR COMMUNITY INITIATIVES



Growth is underway in the Backpacks for Kids program! The community will now see a new name, "Snack Pak 4 Kids". With the new name comes a new relationship with our food supplier Love and Care Ministries. The League will be voting in September to opt in to this change so we can provide healthier food for our kids at a lower cost.

Last year we sponsored an average of forty-two students from Reagan and Bassetti Elementary Schools each week. This year we plan to sponsor at least seventy-five! Snack Pak 4 Kids is just getting started in Abilene, and we are excited to help launch the program. While this program is currently only in local elementary schools, we plan to expand into every area middle and high school, focusing more on students as a whole instead of groups in specific schools. By partnering with Love and Care, we will be more efficient in helping the community.

Besides providing funding and Snack Paks for students, we will also provide volunteers to pack the bags of food at quarterly events, delivering the packs to the schools every week, and returning containers to Love and Care after the packs are distributed. League members can look forward to more work shifts this coming year. Once a quarter, members will be able to join together with several churches and service organizations in order to pack bags of non-perishable food items to be distributed to participating schools. These events will also be great for our Junior Leaders to volunteer with too!

Finally, we will also continue our delivery shifts. League members will arrive at Love and Care to pick up the Snack Paks and then deliver the bags to schools. These shifts are very flexible and can be done on your own time. Enjoy your lunch break while helping the students enjoy theirs! Stay tuned for more details this next year.

Bria Varner

2018-19 Backpacks Co-Chairman,
Junior League of Abilene

Say Cheese

OUR FUTURE JUNIOR LEADERS



WHO'S WHO

1. Lucas, son of Jeremy and Kristie McBrayer, born March 27, 2018.
2. Tyce George, son of Ted and Mattie DeVries, born March 29, 2018.
3. Camden Jade, daughter of Seth and Britt Willis, born April 10, 2018.
4. Claire Harlean, daughter of Dan and Belinda Southall, born August 17, 2018.
5. Millie Ruth, daughter of Nolen and Precilla Camacho, born August 30, 2018.
6. Charlotte Collins, daughter of Austin and Callie Roeder, born on September 5, 2018.
7. Benjamin Jude Joel, son of Josh and Megan Rucker, born September 18, 2018.
8. John Dunn, son of Matt and Laura Gabso, born October 1, 2018.
9. Rose Louise, daughter of Travis and Erika Thornton, born October 13, 2018.
10. Rhett Lucas, son of Russell and Rachel Harred, born on October 18, 2018.
11. Gavin Lee, son of Daniell and Erica Jara, born November 12, 2018.
12. Abigail Celia, daughter of Alfonso and Denise Hernandez, born January 12, 2019.
13. Addison Rae, daughter of David and Hilary Ince, born January 22, 2019.
14. Corbin Don, son of Chase and Christin McClain, born March 6, 2019.
15. Gideon W., son of Greg and Bria Varner, born April 30, 2019.
16. Boone Emerson, son of Brandon and Trista Bailey, born May 23, 2019.
17. William Patrick, son of Patrick and Elyse Lewis, born May 1, 2019.
18. Lincoln Michael, son of Casey and Megan Longmire, born June 18, 2019.
19. Blakely Rose, daughter of Tyler and Kyla Hale, born June 20, 2019.

born September 18, 2018. **8.** John Dunn, son of Matt and Laura Gabso, born October 1, 2018. **9.** Rose Louise, daughter of Travis and Erika Thornton, born October 13, 2018. **10.** Rhett Lucas, son of Russell and Rachel Harred, born on October 18, 2018. **11.** Gavin Lee, son of Daniell and Erica Jara, born November 12, 2018. **12.** Abigail Celia, daughter of Alfonso and Denise Hernandez, born January 12, 2019. **13.** Addison Rae, daughter of David and Hilary Ince, born January 22, 2019. **14.** Corbin Don, son of Chase and Christin McClain, born March 6, 2019. **15.** Gideon W., son of Greg and Bria Varner, born April 30, 2019. **16.** Boone Emerson, son of Brandon and Trista Bailey, born May 23, 2019. **17.** William Patrick, son of Patrick and Elyse Lewis, born May 1, 2019. **18.** Lincoln Michael, son of Casey and Megan Longmire, born June 18, 2019. **19.** Blakely Rose, daughter of Tyler and Kyla Hale, born June 20, 2019.



JUNIOR LEAGUE OF
ABILENE

774 Butternut St, Abilene, TX 79602

U.S. POSTAGE
NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
P A I D
PERMIT NO. 2401
ABILENE, TEXAS
7 9 6 0 2

