



"Fostering Educated and Involved Young People"™

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Education in Action is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to empowering young people to be informed and active leaders in their communities.

Special Edition Newsletter – 2015-2016 Lone Star Leadership Academy Alumni Council



Education in Action is proud to announce 87 outstanding young student leaders successfully completed the 2015-2016 Lone Star Leadership Academy Alumni Council program. Members represented 46 school districts, one charter school, and seven private schools. This special edition newsletter highlights these students and their accomplishments as members of the 2015-2016 Lone Star Leadership Academy Alumni Council.

Program and Purpose

Each year outstanding student leaders are nominated by their educators to participate in summer Lone Star Leadership Academy camps. Upon completion of these leadership programs, alumni are invited to join Education in Action's alumni organization, the Lone Star Leadership Academy Alumni Council, where they receive a structured and guided opportunity to continue their leadership training during the school year. This year's lessons focused on what makes a good leader and a self-analysis of their leadership skills, active listening – learning the difference between already preparing your response and really hearing what the other person is saying, and a discussion of possible changes to the Alumni Council structure. Leadership skills were honed and put into action through service projects which members were responsible for creating and leading in their communities. Through these service projects, members improved the lives of those around them. Project requirements included finding a teacher/sponsor, creating a project action plan, incorporating the assistance of at least two peers, and documenting projects in an electronic portfolio.

Members who successfully complete program requirements have the opportunity to return to Lone Star Leadership Academy camps as Youth Facilitators. Youth Facilitators mentor younger students participating in the Lone Star Leadership Academy and receive additional leadership training during the camp.

The Education in Action staff commends the accomplishments of the 2015-2016 Lone Star Leadership Academy Alumni Council. We look forward to their participation in future Education in Action programs and to watching them grow and achieve throughout their educational careers and beyond.

In their quest to become better leaders, an elite group of students signed up to participate in the 2015-2016 Lone Star Leadership Academy Alumni Council. This year, membership



**Carolyne Markle,
Alumni Coordinator**

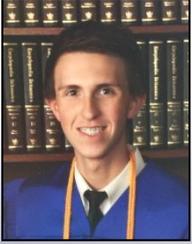
requirements included completing three online leadership lessons, selling scholarship fundraiser tickets, and creating and carrying out a service project. I encourage members to choose service projects close to their hearts because as they work through the projects, their concern for the causes increases along with their results. As the Lone Star Leadership Academy Alumni Council Coordinator, I am amazed and inspired by the positive contributions these students make to our world. These students are learning that change starts with one determined person willing to take on a challenge. They help me believe that our future is in good hands. Their hard work and accomplishments always inspire me to become more involved. I hope you are inspired as well.

**Carolyne Markle
Alumni Coordinator**

Education in Action thanks each individual who served as project sponsor for a Lone Star Leadership Academy Alumni Council member. Your time and support adds great value to the experience of these outstanding young leaders.

Graduating Seniors

Seven of the 2015-2016 Lone Star Leadership Academy Alumni Council members are high school seniors. Danielle DeLaPaz has been a Council member for eight years; Blake Bodin has been a Council member for seven years; Nicolas Ciggelakis, Elisabeth Teitelman, and Sam Walker have been Council members for five years; Kaitlyn Jones has been a Council member for four years; and Bedrick Topovich has been a Council member for three years. Education in Action recognizes these outstanding students for their leadership, dedication, and many accomplishments. Each senior will receive a Certificate of Recognition and a Texas flag flown over the Texas State Capitol from Education in Action in honor of their graduation. We wish these outstanding students the very best as they pursue their dreams and goals.



Blake Bodin, Centennial High School, Burleson ISD

Blake will graduate at the top of his class, having taken numerous AP classes and passing his AP exams with 3s and 4s. As one of seven students selected to participate in a medical program offered through his high school, Blake spends two days a week at Texas Health Huguley Hospital and will earn a Certified Medical Assistant certificate upon graduation. Blake serves on student council and is an avid golfer. Blake will attend Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi, to major in Chemistry. Blake is an Education in Action Trailblazer, having attended all three Lone Star Leadership Academy camps. He returned on the Lone Star Leadership Academy camps for two years as a Youth Facilitator. Blake has been a member of the Lone Star Leadership Academy Alumni Council for seven years. One year, after the fertilizer plant

explosion in West, Texas, Blake joined several other Council members in a group service project to collect books to restock the West ISD school libraries which had been destroyed. Blake collected 1,415 books for West ISD. The other six years of membership on the Council Blake raised money to buy supplies for, and made, fleece blankets for patients at Cook Children's Hospital Trauma Department. Over the years Blake has donated 60 plus blankets.



Nicholas Ciggelakis, Lake Ridge High School, Mansfield ISD

Nicholas is a member of the academic decathlon team, UIL academics, yearbook staff, and debate team. He has served as president of the debate team, president of UIL, photography editor for the yearbook, and historian of his senior class. He volunteers at the First Baptist Church in Mansfield and is active in his church's youth group. Nicholas will attend Texas A&M University in the fall to major in Political Science. Nicholas is an Education in Action Trailblazer, having attended all three Lone Star Leadership Academy camps. He returned on the Lone Star Leadership Academy-Dallas/Fort Worth camp as a Youth Facilitator. Nicholas has been a member of the Lone Star Leadership Academy Alumni Council for five years. One year, after the fertilizer plant explosion in West, Texas, Nicholas joined several other Council members in

a group service project to collect books to restock the West ISD school libraries which had been destroyed. In addition to collecting 450 books, he acquired class sets of classics and other literature to donate from his school district's textbook department. His service projects the other four years each involved collecting canned goods and clothing items for homeless and needy families. Benefiting organizations included Beautiful Feet Ministries, Dallas Life Foundation, Wesley Mission Center, and Mission Arlington.



Danielle DeLaPaz, Ronald Reagan High School, North East ISD

Danielle will graduate summa cum laude and is a member of the National Honor Society. She is a member of PALS, a program that encourages high school leaders to act as positive role models by becoming friends with elementary students. She is also involved in Lifeteen, the youth group at her church. Danielle has been dancing, including ballet, jazz, contemporary, hip-hop, modern, improvisation, and tap, for 14 years and is a pre-professional dancer at Collective Dance Artistry. She was chosen as an Overall Celebrity Teen Soloist and was a Finalist at the LA Dance Magic Dance Down. Danielle was invited to become a Hall of Fame All-Star Team member and will attend The Dance Awards in Las Vegas this summer. She has received both the Nuvo Dance Scholarship and the 24/7 Dance Scholarship. This fall

Danielle will attend The University of Texas at Austin to major in math. Her future goal is to become an orthodontist. Danielle is an Education in Action Trailblazer, having attended all three Lone Star Leadership Academy camps. She has been a member of the Lone Star Leadership Academy Alumni Council for eight years. Danielle completed the same service project, collecting over 200 pairs of socks for active duty and wounded military personnel, each of her eight years on the Council. In addition, she made and sold bracelets to raise funds for Juvenile Diabetes research, collected teddy bears for the Ronald McDonald House, organized a teacher appreciation function, and treated the Coronado Assisted Living Center residents to a dance program called Dancing Petals.



Kaitlyn Jones, Wheeler High School, Wheeler ISD

Kaitlyn will graduate in the top 5% of her class with a Distinguished Diploma. She made the Dean's List at Clarendon College where she took dual credit classes in math, history, anatomy, and physiology. She is a member of National Honor Society, student council, and FCCLA (Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America). As a member of the UIL mathematics team, she advanced to regional competition three out of four years. Kaitlyn received a scholarship from, and was named Sweetheart of, the Wheeler Lions Club. This fall Kaitlyn will attend the University of Central Oklahoma to earn a bachelors degree in Science of Speech/Language Pathology. She then plans to transfer to the University of Oklahoma to earn a doctorate degree in audiology. Kaitlyn attended the Lone Star Leadership Academy-Houston/Galveston camp and has been a member of the Lone Star Leadership Academy Alumni Council for four years. One year, after the fertilizer plant explosion in West, Texas, Kaitlyn joined several other Council members in a group service project to collect books to restock the West ISD school libraries which had been destroyed. She passed out flyers around town and collected 250 books for the cause. The other three years she provided tutoring services for her service project.



Elisabeth Teitelman, Wylie East High School, Wylie ISD

Elisabeth will graduate in the top 4% of her high school class as a Distinguished Graduate. She currently serves as historian in National Honor Society and is student council president. She was also Air Force Junior ROTC Corps commander the first semester of her senior year. Elisabeth is a member of the Raider Nation Powerlifting Team, Raider2Raider Mentoring, Principal's Advisory Council, and Academic UIL. Throughout her four years of high school, Elisabeth has completed over 1,500 service hours on her campus and in her community. She was awarded the Opportunity Award Scholarship, the Sul Ross Corps Scholarship, and an Air Force ROTC Type-7 Scholarship. In the fall, Elisabeth will attend Texas A&M University at College Station where she will be a cadet in the Fightin' Aggie Corps of Cadets. Elisabeth will major in government, and, after earning her BA, will enter the Air Force as a Second Lieutenant to serve as an Intelligence Officer. Elisabeth is an Education in Action Trailblazer, having attended all three Lone Star Leadership Academy camps. She has been a member of the Lone Star Leadership Academy Alumni Council for five years. For her service projects, Elisabeth collected hundreds of coats and jackets which she donated to the Wylie Christian Care Center. She also collected supplies and cash donations for In-Sync Exotics, a "Big Cat" rehabilitation center. For her service, Elisabeth was awarded the Raiders in Service Cord, the American Veterans Award, the National Sojourners Award, the Air Force Association Award, and the Community Service of Excellence Award.



Bedrick Topovich, North Hills Preparatory School, Irving ISD

Bedrick will graduate from North Hills Preparatory School as an AP Scholar. He served as treasurer for the school video game club and plays trumpet and French horn in the school band. Bedrick is involved with his church and frequently participates in their Red Cross blood drives. Bedrick is currently undecided but plans to attend The University of Texas at Dallas, University of Houston, or Bentley University. Bedrick is an Education in Action Trailblazer, having attended all three Lone Star Leadership Academy camps. He returned on the Lone Star Leadership Academy camps for two years as a Youth Facilitator. Bedrick has been a member of the Lone Star Leadership Academy Alumni Council for four years. One year, after the fertilizer plant explosion in West, Texas, Bedrick joined several other Council members in a group service project to collect books to restock the West ISD school libraries which had been destroyed. He collected 80 books for the cause. Bedrick's other service projects included putting together back to school and Christmas church band programs for his church congregation and gathering the neighborhood's stray cats, cleaning and feeding them, and taking them to a no-kill shelter in Irving for adoption.



Sam Walker, Keller High School, Keller ISD

Sam will graduate with honors in the Distinguished Achievement Program. He is a member of the National Honor Society, an International Honor Thespian, and an AP Scholar. Sam was a member of two UIL One Act play companies, one of which made it to state. Sam earned a Green Cord for volunteering at least 100 hours each of his four years of high school. This fall, Sam will attend Southern Methodist University to major in mechanical engineering. He will also take technical theatre courses and participate in theatrical productions at SMU's Meadows School of the Arts. He was awarded two academic scholarships, the Second Century Scholarship and the Discovery Scholarship from SMU. Sam is an Education in Action Trailblazer, having attended all three Lone Star Leadership Academy camps. He returned on the Lone Star Leadership Academy camps for five years as a Youth Facilitator. Sam has been a member of the Lone Star Leadership Academy Alumni Council for six years. One year, after the fertilizer plant explosion in West, Texas, Sam joined several other Council members in a group service project to collect books to restock the West ISD school libraries which had been destroyed. Sam collected 800 books for West ISD. Sam's love of theatre led him to collect used and no longer needed costumes, props, and equipment from the Keller High School theatre department for redistribution to the middle school theatre departments that don't have budgets for these items. Sam's project included inventorying and notifying the Keller ISD middle schools of the available items. His other service projects included collecting supplies and money for the Humane Society of North Texas and the Boyd Wild Animal Sanctuary and organizing weekend and vacation food boxes for an elementary student in need.

2015-2016 Service Projects

Alice ISD

Nathaniel Ragland, 8th grader, **William Adams Middle School**, 2nd year member

*Project: **Make Supporting the Rainbow Room Part of Your New Year's Resolution!*** - Nathaniel and his sponsor collected items to give to teenagers taken into foster care by Child Protective Services. They collected five boxes of clothes, three boxes of toiletries, and monetary donations. The Rainbow Room used the proceeds of the project to provide needed items to kids who are less fortunate. Nathaniel said, *"Through this project I learned how to better organize myself and set priorities."* Sponsor: **Seana Towler**, CASA Program Director.



Alief ISD

Vincent Iwunze, 8th grader, **O'Donnell Middle School**, 2nd year member

*Project: **Help for the Flint Water Crisis*** - Vincent and the National Honor Society at O'Donnell Middle School were very concerned with the safe drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan. They decided to collect water and connect on a school-to-school level so the kids of Flint would know others are concerned about them and want to help. Vincent said, *"This project helped me see that, as a leader, I should be able to think outside the box to come up with creative solutions for problems we all could face."* Sponsor: **Son Nguyen**, Teacher.



Allen ISD

Gezae Tesfaye, 7th grader, **Curtis Middle School**, 3rd year member

*Project: **Summer Food Collection for Kids*** - Gezae and her friends collected food for needy children and donated it to Allen Community Outreach. The donated food will help feed children during the summer so they can enjoy doing other fun summer activities. Gezae said, *"I gained a sense of selflessness because these kids didn't have the things that I take for granted everyday."* Sponsor: **Melissa Tesfaye**, Mother.

Alvin ISD

Kylie Ede, 8th grader, **Nolan Ryan Junior High School**, 1st year member

*Project: **Houston Humane Society*** - Kylie recruited two classmates to help pets without homes who are at the Houston Humane Society. They collected over 200 items for the Houston Humane Society. Kylie said, *"Organizing this fundraiser really helped me develop a sense of responsibility and helped me work on my time management skills."* Sponsor: **Amy Gardziel**, Teacher.



Big Sandy ISD

Taylor Plaisance, 8th grader, **Big Sandy Junior High School**, 1st year member

*Project: **Mitts For Kids*** - Taylor saw a lot of students at bus stops without mittens or gloves. She recruited fellow Lone Star Leadership Academy camper Emily Holmes to assist with collecting mittens and gloves to be given to the 300 students at Big Sandy Elementary. Taylor and Emily collected 571 pairs of mittens, enough for all Big Sandy Elementary School students and children at several area daycare facilities. Taylor said, *"I was overwhelmed and humbled by the amount of support that I received. It gave me the*

confidence to step out and lead this project. I have also become a stronger leader in my school." Sponsor: **Sara Turrentine**, NJHS Sponsor.



Bowie ISD

Jax Williams, 5th grader, **Bowie Intermediate School**, 1st year member

*Project: **New Student Welcome Packets*** - Jax put together 144 packets for his school to distribute to new students. In addition to school information, Jax included information that would be interesting to kids, such as the location of local parks, sports information, community resources, club enrollment forms, after school programs, and lunch delivery options. Jax wanted new students to be excited about their new school and to feel a sense of belonging. Jax is very proud of his school and community and wants new students to feel the same. Jax said, *"I wanted new students to know that our small town has a lot to offer, and it is cool being a kid here. As I gathered and compiled the information for the packets, my*

communication skills with various organizations and businesses dramatically improved. I hope new students now feel welcome to both the school and the community." Sponsor: **Brandy Williams**, PTO Officer.

Carroll ISD

Sophia Deras, 9th grader, **Carroll High School**, 3rd year member

*Project: **Snack Packs for Northwest ISD** - Sophia recruited over 20 friends and family members to help collect food for Northwest ISD's Snack Pack program. Sophia and her recruits collected 1,107 food items, which she and her mother used to make 203 snack packs. These snack packs will be distributed to students who depend on school lunches for their main meal. The snack packs provide extra food for needy students during the rest of the week. This is a project Sophia has done for several years and it continues to grow and help more students each year. Sophia said, "Time management and taking responsibility by doing what I say I will do in this project have definitely helped me grow as a person. I am so proud of the growth of my project and I love knowing my work is for a good cause."* Sponsor: **Kristina Czekaj**, Teacher.



Clyde ISD

Kinley Martin, 10th grader, **Clyde High School**, 3rd year member

*Project: **Clyde Clothes Drive** - Kinley recruited most of the students in her high school to help collect clothing for her community. Altogether they collected 10 bags of clothes and distributed them to those in need. Kinley said, "I love helping out my community because I know not everyone is lucky enough to have clothes, shelter, or food all the time. Seeing the look on people's faces when they receive the help they need and they know someone cares about them just makes me very happy and grateful that I can help others."* Sponsor: **Misti Kingston**, Teacher.



Comal ISD

Keslyn Surovik, 9th grader, **Smithson Valley High School**, 2nd year member



*Project: **Christmas Giving at the Ranch** - Keslyn organized the Smithson Valley cheerleaders to provide a wonderful Christmas for the 33 children who live at St. Jude's Ranch for Children, a group foster home. Keslyn spoke with the house moms and then put together lists so each child would receive a personalized snack bag and gift. She had each cheerleader pick a number, 1-45. Numbers 1-33 had the name of a child from the Ranch for which a cheerleader provided a personalized*

snack bag, snacks, and a gift the child had requested. Cheerleaders that selected numbers 34-45 were asked to put in \$20 each. This \$200+ was used to purchase a set of dishes, a set of silverware, a can opener, a cookbook, an ice cream scoop, and a kitchen towel for each of the five houses on the Ranch. Keslyn said, "This project required lots of organization and commitment but everyone was excited to help. The rewards for all of us were amazing. The children and the house moms were so grateful for the snack bags, gifts, and home goods for the houses. I feel like my teammates and I really did something special for these kids." Sponsor: **Kourtney Wallace**, Cheer Coach.

Conroe ISD

Paige Holmes, 7th grader, **McCullough Junior High School**, 1st year member

*Project: **Coats for Change** - Paige enlisted members of her church, Community Christian Church of The Woodlands, to collect new and gently used coats, jackets, and button-ups. She collected 50 items for the Montgomery County Women's Center and Shelter which benefits women and children seeking safety and help from abuse. Sometimes the women and children have to seek shelter in a hurry, forcing them to leave with nothing. They are very grateful for anything they receive and a coat or jacket is a good start. Paige said, "I really enjoyed serving my community. It is always humbling, and rewarding at the same time, to help those in need."* Sponsor: **Joann Chiu**, Children's Assistant Minister.



Copperas Cove ISD

Ethan Swanner, 8th grader, **Copperas Cove Junior High School**, 2nd year member

*Project: **Cove House Clean Up** - Ethan, with the help of two friends, delivered three dining sets that had been collected for the Cove House Homeless Shelter's Transitional Housing. The three boys also spent a morning cleaning up the grounds of the Shelter's main facility. Five Brothers Lawn care provided the lawn equipment to aid in the clean up. Cove House was appreciative to have their yard cleaned up and excited to receive the dining furniture which replaced the worn out furniture they had. Ethan said, "Initially I found it difficult to find workers because of the manual labor of the yard work. However, perseverance paid off and my small crew worked hard and we got the job done."* Sponsor: **Brian Hawkins**, Director of Cove House Emergency Homeless Shelter and Youth Director at Refuge Ministries in Copperas Cove.

Copperas Cove ISD

Brianna Thornton, 8th grader, **Copperas Cove Junior High School**, 4th year member

*Project: **Wings for Women** - Brianna recruited volunteers at her cheer gym, Gymbix, to help her collect donations for Refuge Corporation, an emergency shelter for homeless single women and children. In addition, Brianna and another volunteer participated in a Thanksgiving food drive. They helped with the collection and bagging of the food and passed out Thanksgiving meals to low-income families who could not otherwise afford a Thanksgiving dinner. Brianna said, "These two projects helped me see how much good can be accomplished when we all work together towards the same goal." Sponsor: **Jennifer Czuhajewski**, Teacher.*



Dayton ISD

John Bartee, 11th grader, **Dayton High School**, 4th year member

*Project: **Christmas Cards for the Elderly** - John recruited many of the children at his church to help create Christmas cards for the residents of Magnolia Place Nursing Home. John then delivered each card personally to a resident. The residents were very happy to get the cards the children had made because many of them don't have friends or family who come to see them. John said, "I really enjoyed seeing the joy on their faces when I gave them a card. I learned the importance of making those who are less fortunate feel special, even if only for a little while." Sponsor: **Kerri Bartee**, Director of Christian Faith Formation, St. Joseph and St. Anne Catholic Church.*

Dayton ISD

Anna Brothers, 9th grader, **Dayton High School**, 2nd year member

*Project: **Project Bridge Haven** - Anna and two classmates collected supplies for Bridge Haven Center, a children's advocacy center for sexually abused kids in the Liberty County area. They also collected cash donations from the community and raised \$351.77 which they used to buy toilet paper, water, juice, toys, books, games, and stuffed animals to add to their donated supplies. Anna said, "This experience helped me and my team become more responsible, outgoing, and educated about the needs of some children in our community. This project made a lasting impression on me and many other people." Sponsor: **W.T. Brothers**, Youth Pastor.*



Denton ISD

Ceanna Cooksey, 9th grader, **John H. Guyer High School**, 4th year member

*Project: **Food for Thought** - Ceanna and her mother held a food drive. They collected over 250 food items and raised \$70 to buy food-in-bulk for a local food pantry. Ceanna also volunteered at the food pantry. She helped put together many meals for those who could not provide for themselves. Ceanna said, "It was a good experience to get involved with the food pantry and see what the needs are in my community. I have to say, the thankful smiles weren't too bad either!" Sponsor: **Blake Fentress**, Lieutenant Colonel and AFJROTC Teacher.*

Eanes ISD

Amara Weier, 8th grader, **West Ridge Middle School**, 1st year member

*Project: **Children's Books for Ronald McDonald House** - Amara helped families of sick children staying at the Ronald McDonald House by providing items to help them pass the time. She organized a book drive at school and collected 505 books, puzzles, and movies to donate. The Ronald McDonald House staff was very excited. Amara said, "One person can make a difference but getting 900 students to help can produce fantastic results." Sponsor: **Tracy Kriese**, Teacher.*

Helen He, 9th grader, **Westlake High School**, 1st year member

*Project: **Mobile Art Program Winter Crafts Sale** - With the help of her sister, Helen spent over 20 hours turning old artwork into handmade greeting cards and bookmarks for the Mobile Arts Program, an organization in Austin dedicated to bringing the joy of art to disabled adults and seniors. The handmade cards and bookmarks were sold at the Mobile Art Winter Crafts Sale. The money Helen raised will help cover the program's costs of visits to local nursing homes and adult day care and Alzheimer respite programs. Helen said, "I learned that even if I was working mostly alone, I could still get things done and make a difference, no matter how big or small." Sponsor: **Theresa Zelazny**, Founder of Mobile Art Program.*



Electra ISD

Kadyn Byrd, 5th grader, **Electra Elementary School**, 1st year member

*Project: **Everybody Has A Story** - Kadyn recruited two friends to interview senior citizens in her hometown and then wrote articles about them. Kadyn discovered that Electra is filled with more history than she ever imagined! Her project helped create a legacy for the residents of Electra. Kadyn said, "It was a real surprise to me to hear the interesting stories of our long-time residents. I learned to take the lead and work hard on a project. I am proud to write a bit of history for people in my community to read and to leave my mark for all to know." Sponsor: **Jackie Roebuck**, Community*

Volunteer and Neighbor.

Electra ISD, cont.

Deanna Duensing, 9th grader, **Electra Junior/Senior High School**, 2nd year member

*Project: **Tree of Hope** - In support of cancer research and treatment, Deanna recruited two of her friends to help her create the Tree of Hope. They gathered 150 lights which were sponsored by community members. These lights were hung on a 14 foot tall metal tree in downtown Electra. The Tree of Hope brought a lot of Christmas spirit and cancer awareness to the community. Deanna said, "Because our small oil town has been hit hard by the falling oil prices, I encountered a few setbacks with my project, but with hard work and dedication, I was able to help bring our community together to raise cancer awareness!" Sponsor: **Dee Buchanan**, Teacher.*



Fort Bend ISD

Madison Taylor, 11th grader, **William P. Clements High School**, 7th year member

*Project: **Yarn for Youngsters** - Madison and a friend, along with members of Key Club, worked together to make items to give to Texas Children's Hospital. Together they made 30 stuffed animals, 10 quilts, 20 hats, and various other items for a total of 200 different things which they donated to the hospital. Madison said, "I was able to effectively work with a large group of people which yielded great results. This was a real test of my leadership skills and I learned a lot. It was nice to work alongside my friends and do something really special for the children who are patients at Texas Children's Hospital." Sponsor: **Kimberly Taylor**, Nurse at Texas Children's Hospital.*



Victoria Smith, 8th grader, **First Colony Middle School**, 1st year member

*Project: **FCMS Honors Band Spirit Night** - Victoria held two spirit nights at local restaurants, Wing Stop and Red Mango. The restaurants donated 50% of their earnings for the night. Victoria raised almost \$1,000 to help defray the cost of the school Honor Band's trip to Indianapolis to participate in the Music For All Nations Festival. She organized her band friends to help in the making of flyers and schoolwide announcements. Publicity was the key to the successful spirit nights. Victoria said, "I originally planned to have three restaurants participate in Spirit Night; unfortunately, one backed out. This incident helped me to become a better leader by teaching me to overcome obstacles and adapt to change. I was very proud of the amount of money raised." Sponsor: **David Berndt**, Associate Band Director.*

Aniruddh Sriram, 8th grader, **Quail Valley Middle School**, 1st year member

*Project: **The Cube Club** - Aniruddh created a Rubik's Cube Club open to all students at his school. The club educated the interested students about the concepts and methods of a wide range of Rubik's puzzles, and benefited over 30 members. In addition to helping the students strengthen their problem-solving skills with Rubik's cubes, the club impacted students by cultivating important values like determination, handling failures and successes, valuing different perspectives, and collaboration - all key skills they can use in their lives. Aniruddh said, "I take the initiative to ensure every member enjoys and learns more and more each meeting. The news about my club spread and it was put on our school website. I felt good once I saw the impact I was having on club members, and that my actions had made me a better leader." Sponsor: **Joseph Bernhart**, Teacher.*



Emma Lee, 8th grader, **Sartartia Middle School**, 2nd year member

*Project: **Manna Bags for the Homeless** - Emma wanted to help the homeless in and around Houston. She recruited students from her Soo Bahk Do Martial Arts Studio and asked them to collect items like toothbrushes, toothpaste, socks, Tic Tacs, hand sanitizers, tissues, chopsticks, hand towels, granola bars, water bottles, and rain ponchos. Once these items were collected, she asked the students to come to the martial arts studio to help assemble the items in bags. They assembled 50 bags and each student took a bag with them to distribute to the homeless person of their choosing. Emma said, "I can't possibly help everyone in need, but I can make a difference by lending a helping hand to one person at a time. We also included notes/drawings that truly came*

*from our hearts. I hope the recipients could feel all the love that we included in our Manna Bags." Sponsor: **Ron Williams**, Soo Bahk Do Moo Duk Kwan Martial Arts Instructor.*

Frisco ISD

Kisana Ngwenya, 7th grader, **Clark Middle School**, 2nd year member

*Project: **Toy Drive** - Kisana held a toy drive and collected toys throughout her neighborhood and at her mother's place of employment. She collected a total of three bags filled with toys. Kisana donated the toys to the Lebanon Baptist Church. Every year the church has a project called Operation Christmas Child where they gather up toys and send them to places in need. The donations helped to make Christmas a happy time for kids who wouldn't otherwise get much of a Christmas. Kisana said, "I learned it is always a rewarding gift to give back to the community and give to a person in need." Sponsor: **Erin Sparks**, Texas History Teacher.*



Frisco ISD, cont.

Anang Parikh, 11th grader, **Wakeland High School**, 4th year member

*Project: **Books for Children's Hospital** - Anang recruited several friends to help collect printed materials to be donated to the Children's Medical Center of Plano. Together they collected over 100 items, including books, magazines, and art supplies. The donations will benefit both the hospital visitors and patients, and will allow them to have a better time during their stay at the hospital. Anang said, "I was able to grow my leadership skills through this project. I have worked with Children's Hospital of Plano before and I was very happy that I could contribute to them once again. I like*

being able to contribute to my local community." Sponsor: **Kushangi Parikh**, Mother.

Vedika Pandey, 5th grader, **J.W. and Ruth Christie Elementary School**, 1st year member

*Project: **School Supply Drive** - With the help of two friends, Vedika conducted a School Supply Drive. The group collected \$70 which they used to purchase packets of markers. The markers were then given to J.W. and Ruth Christie Elementary School to be given to needy students. Vedika said, "I feel that I became a better leader by leading this project. I know that I benefited from this project and I was very happy to be able to help others."* Sponsor: **Melissa Dinger**, Teacher.



Grady ISD

Cooper Sims, 7th grader, **Grady School**, 1st year member

*Project: **Tutoring Days** - Cooper recruited three classmates to help him tutor elementary students. Cooper worked with the teachers of the students who needed tutoring to be sure that he was covering material that the teacher felt was important. The project gave elementary students positive role models and the teachers were grateful for the additional help. Cooper said, "I feel that I learned a lot about how to lead a project and make sure everything was ready to go when it was time for the students to come for their tutoring. I learned that being a leader is not only fun, but also benefits everyone around me."* Sponsor: **Regena Hunt**, Teacher.

Greenwood ISD

Harper Duran, 5th grader, **Greenwood Elementary School**, 1st year member

*Project: **Pastries for Paws** - Harper, along with five of her Destination Imagination teammates, organized and hosted eight bake sales at Greenwood High School varsity basketball games. They earned a total of \$610. All profits from the bake sales went to the Midland Rape Crisis and Children Advocacy Center's PAWZ for Kids program. This is a therapy dog program at the Center. There are approximately 30 therapy dogs that regularly volunteer with their owners to sit with child victims of sexual abuse when they come to the Center for interviews and/or therapy. The monetary donation was great, but the students also successfully raised community awareness for an amazing program supporting children experiencing abuse. Harper said, "I encountered many instances when all my teammates could not participate or contribute. I learned to not become frustrated, but instead to lead by example and always put forth my best effort. It felt great to remain dedicated to an important cause. I was happy to make sacrifices in order to help these abused children. The money collected from the bake sales also surpassed our monetary goal and we were all excited about that."* Sponsor: **Heather Brown**, School Counselor.



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Taylor Callicoatte, 9th grader, **Greenwood High School**, 3rd year member

*Project: **Food for Friends** - With the help of her church youth group, Taylor collected food to provide Easter dinner for needy people at several local churches. Once the food was collected, it was sorted and delivered to the other participating churches. Taylor said, "This project allowed me to help lead my church youth group, if only for a short time, and that meant a lot to me. It also felt really good to help families who were less fortunate to have a happy Easter holiday. It was great to see their happiness and know that we had a part in making that happen."* Sponsor: **Pharris Garcia**, Youth Director.

Guthrie CSD

Brylee Smith, 8th grader, **Guthrie Junior High**, 1st year member

*Project: **Project Christmas** - Brylee organized a Christmas party for the senior citizens of Dickens County at the North Dickens County Senior Citizens Center. The Guthrie Common School elementary students entertained the seniors with Christmas songs while the junior high and high school students served snacks and played bingo and card games with them. Brylee also organized a canned food drive so each senior citizen was able to take home some canned goods. Brylee said, "I enjoyed being with all the students and the senior citizens. I learned that it is important to step out of my comfort zone and become a leader and have fun."* Sponsor: **Lynn Hill**, School Counselor.





Hawkins ISD

Emalee Chappa, 8th grader, **Hawkins Middle School**, 3rd year member

Project: Toy Cars and Teddy Bears - Emalee gathered her classmates to help her do a Toy Car and Stuffed Animal Collection Drive for children who are patients at Cook Children's Medical Center in Fort Worth. A young cancer survivor once told Emalee that he was always excited to get a new toy car after receiving his treatment. She was really inspired by him. Together, Emalee and her friends collected over 100 toy cars and stuffed animals that are now being enjoyed by patients receiving various treatments at the hospital and making their day a little brighter. Emalee said, "It was a great experience to donate to these children who are experiencing tough medical issues. It was an honor to carry out this collection drive in memory of an inspirational young lady, Brooke Hester, who recently lost her battle with cancer." Sponsor: **Julie Chappa**, Mother.

Hurst-Eules-Bedford ISD

Tim Harris, 9th grader, **Harwood Junior High**, 1st year member

Project: Performing Christmas Music for a Eules Nursing Home - Tim and four other members of the Harwood Junior High Wind Ensemble went to Legend Health Care and Rehabilitation in Eules and presented a Christmas program for the residents. The residents joined in singing Christmas carols and visited with the young people. Approximately 20 residents attended the program. Tim said, "Despite some minor setbacks, I learned how to use the resources around me to put together an event. Using my organizational skills was very important to this project. Also, the other students and I gained valuable performance experience. The residents seemed to have more Christmas spirit after our program and that was great to see." Sponsor: **Doyle Belville**, Band Director.

Highland ISD

Maura Chapman, 9th grader, **Highland High School**, 1st year member

Project: Gaylord Pantry Food Drive - Maura Chapman recruited her two siblings and a few other students to help her collect canned foods. Gaylord's Pantry, a part of the First United Methodist Church in Sweetwater, distributes about 700 sacks of groceries per week, so they are always grateful for any donations. Maura and her team collected 116 canned food items which they delivered to Gaylord's Pantry. Maura said, "I really enjoyed this project. It has allowed me to learn about time management and how to become a better leader. I also liked collecting the food knowing that it was for an extremely worthy cause." Sponsor: **Dawn Huckabee**, Teacher.



Houston ISD

Camille Abaya, 8th grader, **T.H. Rogers Secondary School**, 4th year member

Project: Brownies for Benefit - Camille and four of her friends raised \$200 which they donated to Child Advocates, a non-profit organization that helps victims of child abuse. They raised the money by baking and selling more than 400 brownies at school, at church, door-to-door, and to different organizations. The girls learned the process to be followed and the amount of effort that goes into holding a fundraiser. They also learned a lot about public speaking through explaining the purpose of their project. Camille said, "I learned how to educate, persuade, and inform the public about a cause that most people don't like to think about. The girls who helped me also became better public speakers. We were all happy to speak on behalf of these abused children." Sponsor: **Susan Skipton**, Girl Scout Leader.



Rohit Dsilva, 10th grader, **DeBakey High School**, 4th year member

Project: Math Tutoring - Rohit tutored 9th grade students at DeBakey High School in Algebra II for more than six months. The students who attended the tutoring sessions learned the concepts thoroughly which improved their academic performance. Rohit said, "By tutoring students, I realized that knowledge shared is knowledge squared. The students improved their math skills and I gained absolute mastery of Algebra II and the satisfaction of helping my fellow students." Sponsor: **Virginia Hayward**, School Counselor.



Hutto ISD

Mara Manskie, 10th grader, **Hutto High School**, 3rd year member

Project: All You Need Is Love - Mara recruited six members from her high school's National Honor Society and together the group made 100 cards to distribute to Pflugerville Care Center residents on Valentine's Day. The recipients of the cards were very grateful to be remembered on Valentine's Day. Mara said, "I learned valuable leadership skills, like how to lead and organize a group, throughout the course of this project. It felt very good to see the impact that such a small effort on our part had on the senior citizens." Sponsor: **Denise Adams**, NHS Advisor.





Keller ISD

Sam Walker, 12th grader, **Keller High School**, 6th year member

*Project: **Weekend Care Packages** - Sam worked with his theatre department to collect nonperishable food for an elementary student who sometimes does not have food over the weekend. To date, they have delivered over 10 pounds of food and are continuing to help this student. Sam said, "I always love to see the impact the smallest actions can have on others." Sponsor: **Patty Steely, Teacher.***

Braydon Thomas, 7th grader, **Trinity Springs Middle School**, 2nd year member

*Project: **Coats for St. Francis Outreach** - With the help of his brothers, Braydon collected coats from area athletic teams and friends. Six large boxes full of coats and jackets were delivered to the St. Frances Outreach Thrift Store for resale. Revenue from these sales will benefit a local food bank and other charities in the area. Braydon said, "The generosity of others helped us exceed our goal. It felt very good to know my brothers, friends, and I were able to help those in need." Sponsor: **James Flynn, Reverend.***



Amalia McClure, 8th grader, **Hillwood Middle School**, 2nd year member

*Project: **Kuddles '4' Kids** - Amalia (Molly) McClure and three of her school friends, collected 49 stuffed animals which they donated to the Watauga Police Department and a local homeless shelter. The majority of these stuffed animals will be given to children who have suffered a traumatic experience. It is our hope that these stuffed animals give them comfort in their time of need. Amalia said, "I was surprised that this project was more difficult than last year's. I had to alter my plans. I organized a fundraiser held two nights at Chick-fil-A to be able to purchase the bears instead of relying on donations. Having to change my plans allowed me to grow my leadership skills by adapting and overcoming the obstacles that were set in my path." Sponsor: **Tim Berube, School Counselor.***

Leander ISD

Brandon Racht, 10th grader, **Vandegrift High School**, 2nd year member

*Project: **Pet Supply Drive** - Brandon and his mother sent a mass email to nine nearby neighborhoods announcing they were holding a pet supply drive to collect donations for the Austin Animal Shelter. People dropped off their donations during the drive held on April 9th. Many items were collected including dog bowls, pet blankets, leashes, collars, and many bags of dog food. Brandon said, "I learned that if you can get a community involved, anything can be accomplished." Sponsor: **Melody Morton, Teacher.***



Lewisville ISD

Connor Watson, 7th grader, **Arbor Creek Middle School**, 2nd year member

*Project: **Lovepacs** - Lovepacs was born out of Connor's wish to help children who may only eat due to the free/reduced meal programs in schools, and perhaps not at all during school breaks. Connor recruited his two younger brothers to help collect food donations in his neighborhood. The response was so overwhelming that he then recruited his church group for a packing party where they packed 30 boxes of food. Enough food was collected to cover the food needs of 30 children in Lewisville ISD for each of the 16 days of Christmas break. Connor said, "When so many of us have so much more than we need, no one should go hungry. This whole experience*

*was amazing, and it was so heartening to witness the generosity and willingness of others to come alongside me and help serve those less fortunate." Sponsor: **Lori Dunn, Church Lifegroup Leader.***

Liberty ISD

Julianne Shivers, 5th grader, **Liberty Elementary School**, 1st year member

*Project: **Super Hero School Supply Drive** - Julianne recruited five friends to help her collect school supplies for Liberty School District students who needed assistance for the spring semester. They collected enough items to make 60 bags of school supplies. Julianne said, "I had a fun time working with my friends and learning that some students may need a little help. It doesn't hurt to try to be nice!" Sponsor: **JoAnn Gilliland, Teacher.***



Lone Oak ISD

Bradon Lynch, 7th grader, **Lone Oak Elementary School**, 2nd year member

*Project: **Helping Hand for Elders** - Bradon enlisted the BETA club to host a school-wide puzzle drive and Christmas card making workshop. The group collected 35 puzzles and made 60 Christmas cards. Bradon and eight other BETA members then delivered the puzzles, cards, and baked goods to area senior citizens. The students also raked and cleaned up senior citizens' yards. The extra puzzles and Christmas cards were delivered to the Lone Oak Senior Center and Operation Blue Santa. Bradon*

*said, "We were surprised at how happy the senior citizens were when we showed up at their houses to rake their leaves and give them presents. I learned that being a leader isn't just helping, but also getting others to help you and keeping them focused on the task." Sponsor: **Louann Derryberry, Junior BETA Coordinator.***

Mansfield ISD

Olivia Weatherford, 7th grader, **Rogene Worley Middle School**, 1st year member

Project: Scarves and Blankets for the Homeless and Needy - Olivia worked with five friends to make 50 scarves and 15 blankets for the homeless in Fort Worth and the elderly in the Mansfield area. The scarves and blankets provided the recipients with warmth and comfort during the colder months and also showed them that others cared about them and wanted to help. Olivia said, "This project made me realize how good it felt to help others less fortunate than myself." Sponsor: **Blake Lindsey**, Teacher.



Melissa ISD

Judson Greer, 7th grader, **Melissa Middle School**, 1st year member

Project: Restocking the Melissa Food Pantry - Judson recruited two of his brothers to help restock the Melissa Food Pantry with much needed food items. The Food Pantry specifically asked for peanut butter, jelly, bread, canned fruit, oatmeal, rice, cereal, and beans. Judson was able to collect over 350 of the pantry's most wanted items to help the residents of Melissa and surrounding areas. Judson said, "I learned how to better manage my time and that helping the community can be harder

than it sounds; but in the end, it's all worth it." Sponsor: **Alexandra Eichel**, Teacher.

Montgomery ISD

Ryan Cockrill, 6th grader, **Montgomery Middle School**, 2nd year member

Project: San Luis Pass Beach Clean Up - Ryan organized his second annual beach clean up near the San Luis Pass in Galveston. He recruited 25 friends, neighbors, and family members to collect dangerous rope, glass, and plastic along the beach. Together they collected more than 10 large garbage bags of trash that would otherwise threaten marine life and disrupt sea turtles' breeding patterns. Ryan said, "It is satisfying to be able to help protect threatened animal species so we can enjoy them for many decades to come. I found that others were willing to help if someone just organizes the project." Sponsor: **Dottie Eichman**, Teacher.



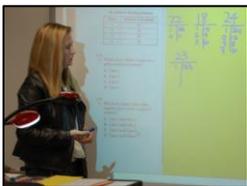
Samuel Fralick, 6th grader, **Montgomery Middle School**, 1st year member

Project: Rainbow Room Blankets - Sam recruited his mom to help him make 20 large twin-sized fleece blankets for the Rainbow Room in Montgomery County. The Rainbow Room is a volunteer-led emergency resource storeroom for Child Protective Services agents to provide basic survival supplies for children who have been removed from their homes due to neglect. The blankets, which took Sam approximately one month to complete, were delivered to the Rainbow Room a week before Christmas. Since the Rainbow Room is supported by volunteer donations and receives no federal funding, their need for blankets was very great. Samuel said, "Making 20 blankets was a big undertaking and took a long time but, in the end, it was totally worth it. For some kids, the

warm blanket they get from the Rainbow Room will be the only blanket they have. These kids are scared because of their home situation. By giving them a blanket, I feel like I'm able to give them a hug just when they need it the most." Sponsor: **Patti Fralick**, Mother.

Ethan Bridges, 6th grader, **Montgomery Middle School**, 1st year member

Project: Collecting Cleats - Ethan collected gently used soccer equipment for the Sport Quest Inc. Second Kick Ministry Program. He donated over 30 pairs of soccer cleats, 15 pairs of shin guards, and numerous soccer balls. The Second Kick program recipients received soccer equipment they would not be able to afford themselves. Ethan said, "I learned how generous my community and friends were through their donations." Sponsor: **Robert Heflin**, Community Member.



Navarro ISD

Lindsy Thormahlen, 8th grader, **Navarro Junior High School**, 2nd year member

Project: Tutoring for the Future - Lindsy tutored the UIL 5th grade Number Sense participants at her school, Navarro Junior High. She loved helping other students learn to love UIL competitions as much as she does. Lindsy said, "The best leader gains wisdom from young minds." Sponsor: **Donna Ewald**, Teacher.

New Braunfels ISD

Jeremy Alkire, 8th grader, **Oak Run Middle School**, 1st year member

Project: Treats for Police - Jeremy, with the help of his brother Matthew and a friend, baked desserts for the New Braunfels Police Department. They made various items, including toffee, lemon squares, and brownies. These baked goods were delivered to show the students' appreciation for the hard work police officers do. Jeremy said, "We learned how to work efficiently and cooperatively in order to make these appreciation treats for our local police department." Sponsor: **Kristen Bryant**, Teacher.





New Braunfels ISD, cont.

Matthew Alkire, 7th grader, **Oak Run Middle School**, 1st year member

*Project: **Treats for Police** - Matthew, together with his brother Jeremy and a friend, baked a variety of treats including cookies, toffee, and brownies to be given to the New Braunfels Police Department. Matthew said, "It feels good that my friends and I were able to help contribute to the people who protect us every day and let them know that we appreciate everything they do for us." Sponsor: **Kristen Bryant**, Teacher.*

Orange Grove ISD

Talee Oaks, 7th grader, **Orange Grove Junior High**, 2nd year member

*Project: **Kid Knits: Winter Hats Donations** - Talee recruited friends and family members to knit 10 hats from Kid Knits: Winter Hats. The hats were donated to 10 children in need. Kid Knits are kits you can buy with yarn made from sheep's wool by hand. Each Kid Knits purchase provides salaries for families living in poverty in Rwanda and Chile. This project impacted the participants by showing them there are families living around the world in poverty that we could never imagine that are trying to make a better life for their families. Talee said, "As we have helped change lives, this will help the future of all of us. Putting a smile on another's face is priceless and it feels awesome to contribute to children in need on the other side of the world." Sponsor: **Mary Katherine Carter**, Friend.*



Paris ISD

Reagan Benson, 10th grader, **Paris High School**, 2nd year member

*Project: **Stuffed Animal Drive for the Children's Advocacy Center of Paris** - Reagan hosted a stuffed animal drive at Aikin Elementary School and, with the help of the students, collected more than 120 stuffed animals. These stuffed animals were donated to the Children's Advocacy Center of Paris to be given to children who have been abused. The stuffed animals will help emotionally support children who have been affected by abuse. Reagan said, "I learned how important helping other people is, and how simple it is to make someone's life better." Sponsor: **Lori Benson**, Mother.*

Pearland ISD

Eli Webster, 7th grader, **Berry Miller Junior High School**, 1st year member

*Project: **Dodgeball Tournament Supporting Candlelighters** - Eli recruited two classmates to help him host a dodgeball tournament at Berry Miller Junior High School to benefit Candlelighters - Childhood Cancer Family Alliance which provides emotional, financial, educational, and practical support to families of children with cancer. Eleven teams entered and they raised over \$600 which will benefit pediatric cancer patients and their families. Every participant was made aware of how having a child in treatment for cancer affects families. Eli said, "This experience helped me learn how to grow a small idea into something bigger which could help many people." Sponsor: **Holly Moreno**, Teacher.*



Melissa Adamaley-Johnson, 9th grader, **Glenda Dawson High School**, 1st year member

*Project: **Books to Africa** - Melissa recruited her fellow Interact Club (a group of students organized for the purpose of volunteering) members to participate in Rotary Books for the World. This organization sends textbooks and books for 'the joy of reading' all over the world, and specifically to Africa. The students of Dawson High School benefited greatly from packing and sorting 3,000 books to send to over 25 developing schools throughout Swaziland and South Africa. In addition to getting a great workout from lifting so many books, the students learned how a group of students can truly impact other nations. Melissa said, "By getting my classmates to work together, I was able to strengthen myself as a leader by putting together a team and keeping them on task despite how tedious the task was. In the end, everyone was excited to see what an impact we had." Sponsor: **Teri Zuteck**, Interact Club Leader.*

Pflugerville ISD

Jordan Castillo, 8th grader, **Dessau Middle School**, 1st year member

*Project: **Thank You Bars** - Jordan recruited two friends and together they made 100 Thank You Candy Bars which were given to the entire staff at Dessau Middle School. They were able to show appreciation to the school staff for all the hard work they put in everyday on behalf of the students. The staff was very appreciative of this small gesture. Jordan said, "I was challenged with finding a date to work on my project because our schedules are so busy. But I was committed to completing my project no matter what and, in the end, we made time to get the job done and we were all glad we did. This made me a stronger leader because I was committed to completing my project." Sponsor: **Melissa Thrash**, Administrative Intern.*





Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD

Gabriella Zuniga, 5th grader, **Carman Elementary School**, 1st year member

Project: Elementary School Coat Drive - Gabriella enlisted her school principal and fellow students to help with a Coat Drive for Tim's Coat Closet, a group in Gabriella's community that accepts new and used coat donations. People in need of a warm coat are welcome to come to Tim's Coat Closet and select one; it's not just a one time event. This was the first time our local elementary school kids participated in helping for a good cause. It got the very young involved early. Gabriella collected over 100 coats for kids and adults in the Rio Grande Valley. Gabriella said, "I learned that I can be a leader within my own school and positively influence others to

participate and help our local community. It made me feel good to be able to help people close to home who are in need." Sponsor: **Adrian Karr**, Principal.

Plano ISD

Téa McCormack, 9th grader, **McMillen High School**, 1st year member

Project: Books for the Family Place - Téa and six friends worked together to collect books to be donated to the Family Place, a shelter for those seeking safety from abuse. They collected 27 books for people staying at the Family Place to enjoy. The group learned that books are appreciated and enjoyed by almost everyone. Téa said, "I learned that even simple books can have an impact on someone's life." Sponsor: **Tammy Spann**, Teacher.



Jordan Sullivan, 8th grader, **Renner Middle School**, 1st year member

Project: Performing for a Reason - Jordan and two friends put together several performances for the senior citizens at Preston Wood Court. With dancing, singing, and music, the girls put a smile on all the residents' faces. The girls visited with the residents after the show and enjoyed getting to interact with everyone. Jordan said, "Throughout the process my friends and I had a lot of fun contributing each of our ideas to create an amazing performance for the residents. They were all very appreciative." Sponsor: **Corrie Rubenstein**, Teacher.

Port Aransas ISD

Aiden Porter, 7th grader, **Brundrette Middle School**, 1st year member

Project: Birds in Our Backyard - Aiden created a photo book to benefit the rehabilitation of Paradise Pond Birding Center in Port Aransas. He included photos of birds taken throughout the town. With the help of some community members, he sold the book and donated all proceeds to purchase natural trees and plants for the pond due to the removal of a large number of Brazilian Peppertrees (an invasive species). The project was beneficial to the preservation of nature and educational for both Aiden and many others in the community. Aiden said, "I learned a lot about the invasiveness of Brazilian Peppertrees and that sometimes, what seems to be a bad thing initially can actually provide us with an opportunities to come together as a community to make things even better than they were before." Sponsor: **Rae Mooney**, Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Project Manager.



Richardson ISD

Carl Leal-Martinez, 6th grader, **Brentfield Elementary School**, 1st year member

Project: Canned Food Drive - Carl led a canned food drive for the North Texas Food Bank. He collected 296 pounds of food which will provide 247 meals for chronically hungry children, families, and seniors in North Texas. Carl said, "The food drive was more difficult than I anticipated because of the great response but I was very proud that we could make such a nice donation and the workers at the North Texas Food Bank were very grateful." Sponsor: **Becky Martinez**.

Sweeny ISD

Alexis Mack, 8th grader, **Sweeny Junior High School**, 4th year member

Project: Socks and Smiles - Alexis wanted to help the residents at the Windsong Rehabilitation Center. She organized a sock drive to collect socks for each of the residents. In addition, she helped decorate all the residents' doors so they would have something pleasant to look at in the halls and remember that someone cares about them. Alexis said, "As a leader, this was a call to help and assist others. I learned that even a small gesture can make a huge impact on someone's day. Hopefully I inspired others to help as well." Sponsor: **Mark Manley**, Robotics and TSA Director.



Wheeler ISD

Kaitlyn Jones, 12th grader, **Wheeler High School**, 4th year member

*Project: **Peer Tutoring** - Kaitlyn tutored a third grade class in Wheeler ISD everyday, from September until the beginning of March, to help them with schoolwork, studying for spelling tests, and practicing reading. By tutoring these students she helped them better prepare for their upcoming STAAR tests. Kaitlyn said, "I was able to see that not all students learn and study in the same way. This experience helped me find new ways of learning for myself."*

*Sponsor: **Lacie Franks**, NHS Sponsor.*



Whitehouse ISD

Caden Black, 6th grader, **Holloway 6th Grade School**, 2nd year member

*Project: **Outfitters** - Caden enlisted the help of his school's Student Council to collect over 1,000 pieces of clothing for the Whitehouse Food Pantry. The Student Council filled over 80 large bags with clothes to be donated. The Whitehouse Food Pantry then distributed the clothes to local residents in need. Caden said, "This project was a lot of work, but the reward was great. I also learned how to keep others interested and motivated until the job was finished." Sponsor: **Travis Splinter**, Principal.*

Wylie ISD

Elisabeth Teitelman, 12th grader, **Wylie East High School**, 5th year member

*Project: **In-Sync Exotics Supply Drive** - In-Sync Exotics is a non-profit organization that helps rehabilitate abused and mistreated "big cats". Elisabeth, with the help of her fellow National Honor Society members, collected over \$500 worth of supplies including toilet paper and laundry detergent. The items were donated to In-Sync following the two week donation drive. Elisabeth said, "I had a great time delivering all of the supplies to In-Sync and seeing the surprised faces of the employees when I opened my trunk and supplies literally were falling out. It makes me feel great to have contributed to such a great organization that works for such a great cause." Sponsor: **Michelle Lindsay**, NHS Co-Advisor.*



Charter Schools

Khalia Simon, 7th grader, **Harmony School of Innovation**, 3rd year member

*Project: **Ronald McDonald House of Fort Worth Donation Project** - Khalia recruited several students from her 7th grade math class to help her collect items for the Ronald McDonald House of Fort Worth. Because there are always families of sick children staying there, the Ronald McDonald House has an on-going need for bath, bedroom, and kitchen supplies. Every month a wishlist is sent for what is needed most. Khalia's goal was to be able to donate \$400 worth of wishlist items. The group exceeded the goal and was able to collect \$475 worth of items. Khalia said, "I love giving back to my community because it gives me such joy to know that my contributions are needed and appreciated." Sponsor: **Trevor Simon**, Father.*



Private Schools

Blake Johnson, 7th grader, **Cornerstone Christian School**, 1st year member

*Project: **ChapStick Collection for Meals for the Elderly** - Blake recruited three friends to help him collect ChapSticks for Meals for the Elderly. They collected 427 ChapSticks in one week from their school. These ChapSticks were given to the disabled and homebound elderly of San Angelo through Meals for the Elderly. Blake said, "I was given a chance to be a leader of a small team that collected ChapStick for the Elderly of San Angelo. My teammates helped me become a better leader along the way." Sponsor: **Paige Southwell**, Teacher.*

Allison Byrd, 9th grader, **Legacy Preparatory Christian Academy**, 1st year member

*Project: **Books for Kids** - Allison, with the help of her neighborhood and school community, collected 300 new books, magazines, and movies for the patient library at Texas Children's Hospital-Downtown. In addition to individual donations, Allison received \$1,000 from Scholastic Books through the help of her school librarian, Angie Condley, to purchase more new books. The donation helped with an immediate and constant need at Texas Children's. Allison said, "Working together with my community and school showed me that I could take something I had as a personal goal and make it bigger and better by enlisting the help of others. I have enjoyed every minute of this project and hope to grow this program even more in the future." Sponsor: **Diane Elliott**, Teacher.*



Private Schools, cont.

Anna Kimata, 10th grader, **Punahou School**, 5th year member

*Project: **Christmas in the Summer*** - Anna and a group of volunteers she recruited solicited donations from local companies such as Costco and the Courtyard Marriott for the Ronald McDonald House in Houston. The donations were distributed among the housed families to provide them with a small gift, personal toiletries, and sweet treats during the summer months. Anna said, *"Leading this project helped me develop my time management, organization, and communication skills, making me a stronger leader. Being able to contribute to my community, specifically the Ronald McDonald House in Houston, was my favorite part."*
*Sponsor: **Kimberly Long**, Teacher.*



Erica Pavliska, 10th grader, **Sacred Heart Catholic School**, 2nd year member

*Project: **Feed the Need*** - Erica organized, set up and publicized Feed the Need, a clothing and food drive during the season of Lent. Bins were set up at school, and students and staff were encouraged and reminded to donate items for the less fortunate in our area. Erica said, *"This experience helped me to educate and encourage my classmates about the importance of sharing and compassion for those who are less fortunate than we are."* *Sponsor: **Ruth Barton**, Administrative Assistant.*



Matthew De Guzman, 9th grader, **St. John XXIII College Preparatory**, 2nd year member

*Project: **Feeding The Hungry*** - Every week for six months, Matthew and three other volunteers worked at the food pantry at St. Bartholomew the Apostle Catholic Church. The group packed and distributed enough bags of food for an average of nine families each week. During this six month project, Matthew and the others learned a lot about each other and the recipients of the food they packed. Matthew said, *"I have learned a lot about myself, my group, and my community through this experience. We were able to make a real difference in our community by using teamwork and good communication skills. I am very proud of our group and the work we did."* *Sponsor: **Mike Day**, St. Vincent De Paul Food Pantry Supervisor.*

Antonio Farr, 5th grader, **St. Philip's School and Community Center**, 1st year member

*Project: **Community Garden*** - Antonio recruited five friends to help with a project that allows families and friends of the East Dallas Community to plant a spice and vegetable garden that brings supplementary foods to homes in our church community. The produce from our efforts will serve and bless at least 50 families. Antonio said, *"I encouraged my friends to help me with the gardens. We had a wonderful experience and now each of them enjoys giving back to the community, too."* *Sponsor: **Jeffery Parker**, Pastor.*



Hayden McCormick, 10th grader, **St. Stephen's Episcopal School**, 5th year member

*Project: **Support for Serene Hills Elementary School Carnival*** - Hayden and 25 members of his Boy Scout troop cleaned up the landscaping at Serene Hills Elementary School in preparation for the school's Spring Carnival. He then recruited family and friends and raised \$418 for the school to provide carnival tickets to local families who could not afford them. He and five friends also signed up as volunteers on the day of the Spring Carnival. Hayden said, *"In taking on multiple roles to fund and assist the event, I was able to get a better perspective about what it takes to hold events like this."* *Sponsor: **John Rocklin**, Teacher.*



Out of State

Kollin Fitch, 11th grader, **Sevier County High School, Sevier County, Tennessee**, 4th year member

*Project: **Project Neighbor Tree-Branching Out to Those in Need*** - Kollin, along with three Teen Board Members, stood outside Walmart and asked patrons to donate personal care products for the Project Neighbor Tree Foundation. Then six Keep Sevier Beautiful members helped sort and package the personal bags for distribution to the Sevier County Food Ministries Program. In April, Kollin distributed 500 personal bags to families who were in need of basic personal care products including deodorant, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and toothbrushes. Kollin said, *"Starting and maintaining Project Neighbor Tree was difficult at first; however, with the help of those in my community, I have been able to have a positive impact on those in need."* *Sponsor: **Heather Overbay**, Teacher.*



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