

KIWANIGRAM



Kiwanis®
GREATER VERNON COUNTY



Kiwanis®
MISSOURI-ARKANSAS DISTRICT
EARL COLLINS FOUNDATION



Kiwanis® September 2026
MISSOURI-ARKANSAS DISTRICT

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

Missouri-Arkansas District of Kiwanis



Role	Leader
Governor	Ronald Hill
Incoming Governor	Jeff Maxwell
Incoming Governor-Elect	Elbert Bradley, Jr.
Immediate Past Governor	Jim Fritz
District Secretary	Angie Oshia
Interim Webmaster	Angie Oshia
District Treasurer	Robin Asher
Interim Kiwanigram Editor	Robin Asher
Key Club Governor	Dakota Menning
CKI (Circle K) Governor	Russell Haynes

[HTTPS://K14.SITE.KIWANIS.ORG/](https://k14.site.kiwanis.org/)

Kiwanigram

Service stories, leadership,
and community connections



Kiwanigram Contributors

Contributor	Affiliation
David Nieber	Lt. Gov., Division 12
Richard Pierce	Kiwanis Member
Jodi Polk	Kiwanis Member
Maretta Diestelkamp	Kiwanis Member
Monica Huddleston	Kiwanis Member
Kathy Josephsohn	Kiwanis Member
Melissa Sims	Kiwanis Member
Jeane Harp-	Kiwanis Member
Martha Radginski	Kiwanis Member
Dawn Blake	Kiwanis Member
Jeff Maxwell-	Incoming Governor
Marsha McClanahan	Trustee, Region 3
Ronda Ray	Kiwanis Member
Linda Schneider	Kiwanis Member
Deidra Ellison	Kiwanis Member

From the Incoming Governor

Jeff Maxwell · Governor 2026–2027 · MO/ARK Kiwanis

“The difference we make in lives this coming year will continue in those lives when another year comes.”



A new year at the precipice

Here we are at the precipice. Now, being at a precipice is not always the place to be. Often, it involves looking out over a vast expanse that is uncertain and somewhat scary. But the precipice that we, as Missouri-Arkansas Kiwanis, are standing on is that of a new year.

We begin that year with all kinds of things going on in our lives, our clubs, and our jobs. Everything we are involved in as we begin new years is filled with some apprehension for us. What if this happens or does not happen? What if things we have not counted on come along and seek to throw us off course? A whole host of questions and worries haunt us as we face new beginnings.

For us as Kiwanis in Missouri-Arkansas, the same issues face us. What will the next 12 months mean for us as individual members, as clubs, and collectively as a district? One thing we know for certain is that the children of our communities and our areas will still face needs that time just will not erase.

For us, the issue is how we continue to meet the needs of the youth in our communities, reaching out to make a difference in their lives. That cannot change in the coming year. We must remain committed to making that difference, because the difference we make in lives this coming year will continue in those lives when another year comes.

Keep up the great service, and this year will be one we can remember, knowing that our efforts counted and will continue to count.

Greater Vernon County Receives Earl Collins Foundation Grant

To create a countywide LEGO lending collection · By Jodi Polk

The Kiwanis Club of Greater Vernon County has received a \$1,000 grant through the Missouri-Arkansas District of Kiwanis Foundation's Earl Collins Foundation Service Leadership Program to launch "Building Connections Through LEGO Play," a new community resource designed to encourage creativity, learning, and family engagement throughout Vernon County.

The LEGO collection will be administered by On My Own, Inc., and used in parent support groups, youth development activities, and family-centered programming. It will also be available to loan to community organizations across the county, providing opportunities for libraries, schools, civic groups, churches, homeschool programs, and other organizations to incorporate hands-on building activities into their events.

Featuring both traditional LEGO bricks and DUPLO sets, the collection is designed for participants of all ages and abilities. LEGO-based activities support creativity, teamwork, problem-solving, fine-motor development, communication skills, and social connection while providing an inclusive activity for a variety of community settings.

The Kiwanis Club of Greater Vernon County appreciates the support of the Missouri-Arkansas Kiwanis Foundation and the Earl Collins Foundation Service Leadership Program for helping bring this shared community resource to life. Through this partnership, the collection will provide lasting opportunities for families, organizations, and community members to connect, create, and learn together.



Cover Photo caption: Members of the Kiwanis Club of Greater Vernon County celebrate the launch of the new "Building Connections Through LEGO Play" community lending collection, pictured from left to right: Joe Wilson, Brittany Bailey, Jodi Polk, Kalli Gober, Amanda Gilchrist, and Carol Branham.



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Members of Greater Vernon County—volunteer at an On My Own, Inc. Family Fun event

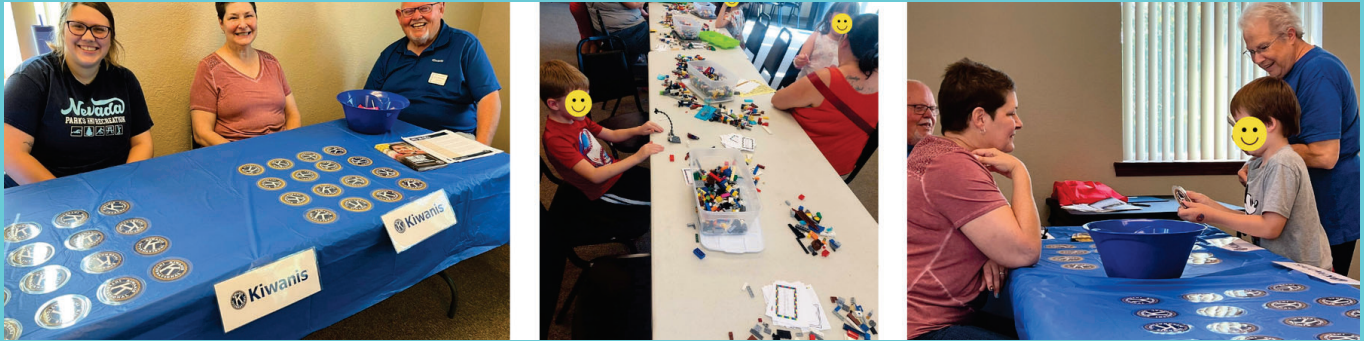


Photo inset caption: Members of Greater Vernon County—Jeff Maxwell, Beth Waldrup, and Hannah Williams—volunteer at an On My Own, Inc. “Family Fun event.”

Kids Need Kiwanis



KIWANIGRAM SUBMISSIONS

Information to be considered for the Kiwanigram should be submitted by email tomoarkkiwanigram@gmail.com. Please include the name and location of your club. The photos should be jpeg format. Please include a brief description of the project along with the names of Kiwanians, or SLP members featured in the photos. Your submission may be featured in the Kiwanigram, District website and/or MO-ARK Kiwanis Facebook group.

Club & Service News

Stories of neighbors helping neighbors and giving children room to thrive.

Amy Turner Award Presented

By Maretta Diestelkamp, Secretary, Kiwanis Club of St. James

The St. James Kiwanis Club was honored to award Laurie Lambeth the 2026 Amy Turner Award. Laurie currently serves as the St. James Police Department clerk and works with the City of St. James to coordinate information about community events. She has been instrumental in organizing the Sensory Santa Event, Operation Sweetness, Special Olympics Send-Off, and a Christmas parade for a terminally ill child.

Laurie also helps secure donations for the Tot Pack Program, remove overdue school lunch balances, and provide for house-fire victims. She is currently leading a book club at the James Memorial Public Library.

The Amy Turner Award was developed in 2022 to honor Amy Turner, who was a member of the St. James Kiwanis Club for many years. Amy passed away in 2023.



Photo caption: Pictured are Laurie Lambeth and Dennis White.

Education Grants Awarded

By Maretta Diestelkamp, Kiwanis Club of St James

The Kiwanis Club of St. James presented John Perkins with the first half of his Education Grant. John will attend Evangel University in Springfield, MO, and pursue a law degree. Best wishes to John Perkins. Pictured are Caryl Mussig, Education Grant Committee, and John Perkins.



The Kiwanis Club of St. James also presented Avery Campbell with the first half of her Education Grant. Avery is attending the University of Missouri (MIZZOU) in Columbia, MO, and currently studying pre-med. She is also part of the Honors College. Avery's long-term goal is orthopedic surgery. Best wishes to Avery Campbell. Pictured are Caryl Mussig, Education Grant Committee; Avery Campbell; April Williams, Education Grant Committee; and Cheryl Palmer, Education Grant Committee.



Joplin Legion of Honor Awardees

By Lt. Gov. David Niebur

Lt. Governor David Niebur reported that, in July at their weekly meeting, the Joplin Kiwanis Club inducted eight of its members into the Kiwanis Legion of Honor. A minimum of 25 years of service is required for this award. Jim Hicklin reached the 50-year milestone, while the other recipients have between 25 and 38 years of service.



Photo caption: Left to right, recipients are Todd Chenault, David Evans, William Eichman, John Hayek, Nancy Wilkins, Richard LaNear, and James Hicklin. Don Swanson was unable to attend.

Downtown Springfield Hosts Big Brothers Big Sisters Breakfast

By Dawn Blake

The Kiwanis Club of Downtown Springfield hosted a breakfast for Big Brothers Big Sisters children who are still waiting for “Bigs.” The children and their parents enjoyed pancakes, sausage, and orange juice. There was also a foam machine, a firetruck to explore, and ice cream from the police department’s Paw Patrol ice cream truck.

Before going home, the children received back-to-school supplies from BBBS. It was an action-packed morning loaded with fun for everyone!

Legion of Honor Awards for Jeff and Mary Hartman

by Linda Linda Schneider

Jeff and Mary Hartman were honored at the Union Kiwanis Club installation meeting on September 16. Don Leupold, 2015-16 MoArk District Governor, presented Legion of Honor certificates and pins to both Jeff and Mary. Jeff has been a Kiwanis member for 35 years. He has served as MoArk District Secretary-Treasurer and also as Lt. Governor for Division 10. Mary has been a Kiwanis member for 30 years. She served as secretary for her local club and has been active in MoArk activities.

Jeff served as Charter President for the Kiwanis Club of Pacific, MO In 1974. Recognitions for his Kiwanis positions include: Distinguished Club Secretary, Distinguished Club President and Distinguished Lieutenant Governor for the MO-Ark Kiwanis District.

He received a Tablet of Honor from Governor Mike Flowers. Jeff served as the Region 5 Trustee in 2009. He received a George F. Hixson Fellowship Award and also a Kiwanis International Foundation Tablet of Honor. Jeff served as Secretary-Treasurer for the Mo-Ark District for six years.

Mary served as secretary of the Kiwanis Club of Pacific. She is a recipient of a Walter Zeller Fellowship Award from Kiwanis International and also a George F. Hixson Fellowship Award.

Jeff and Mary have been married 52 years.



Pictured left to right: Don Leupold, Jeff Hartman, Mary Hartman

Russellville, AR, Club Fire

By Richard Pierce

Richard Pierce reported in July that the Russellville, AR, Club suffered a setback on June 16 when the Check H restaurant, which was their meeting place, burned to the ground. The club was scheduled to hold its regular meeting at noon the next day, with the president of ATU College as the guest speaker.

The club was contacted about 7 p.m. on Tuesday night that the fire was underway. As a result, the club lost all of its banners and plaques showing previous presidents, as well as songbooks, membership applications, and its brass bell used for more than 30 years to start and adjourn meetings.

As the remains of the restaurant were being demolished, President Richard Pierce stopped by and talked to the general contractor about the bell to see whether it could be found. He received word the next day that the bell had been retrieved. It was not destroyed, but it will need extensive cleaning. A member of the local Lions Club retrieved part of one of the club's banners.

The club has moved its meetings to Brown's Catfish and is slowly rebuilding the materials that were lost.

The treasurer found Kiwanis songbooks online and was able to obtain 25 of them. New name tags have been created, so the club is continuing to serve the children of the River Valley area.



News from the Kiwanis Club of O'Fallon

By Martha Radginski

On Saturday, August 15, volunteers from the O'Fallon Kiwanis helped the O'Fallon Salvation Army Food Pantry collect non-perishable food outside the Dierbergs Market at 94 Plaza from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Shop Out Hunger event was a regionwide food drive held at more than 100 participating grocery stores.

Led by Food Pantry Director Michelle Smith, the event gathered food from area grocery stores for use at the O'Fallon Salvation Army Food Pantry. Kiwanis volunteers Dave, Martha, and Ed were able to stand at the shady entrance of the Dierbergs store on 94 Highway.

With the amount of food donated, the food pantry will receive needed items to distribute to families in need throughout the area.



Jared Boxes Delivered to Arkansas Children's Hospital Northwest in Springdale

By Jeane Harp, Kiwanis Club of Springdale

Lt. Governor **Sharon Horwart** presented 24 **Jared's boxes** prepared at the MOARK District Convention in Springfield, MO, to Simone Sing, representative from Arkansas Children's Hospital Northwest in Springdale, AR.



Delivery of Jared Boxes to Mercy Hospital in Creve Coeur, Missouri

By Kathy Josephsohn, Kiwanis Club of Meramec Valley Community

Recently, Kiwanis Club of Meramec Valley Community President James Grant (left) and Treasurer Paul Eckler (center) delivered a donation of dozens of small toys and games packed in "Jared Boxes" to Kelsey Mitchell, certified Child Life Specialist at Mercy Children's Hospital in Creve Coeur, MO.

The **Jared Box Project**, a national nonprofit organization, provides clear plastic storage boxes to community organizations for packing small toys that are given to medical facilities serving pediatric patients. At the district convention, members of the Missouri-Arkansas District of Kiwanis International filled 212 Jared Boxes at the convention. Kiwanians then distributed the boxes back to their local community hospitals.

KCON at NELC — First Day Photos

By Monica Huddleston

Kudos to the Kiwanis Club of Normandy 24:1 members who came out to the Normandy Early Learning Center to welcome the little ones on their first day of school. The children were decked out in crisp uniforms, perfect hair, loaded backpacks, and million-dollar smiles as they marched hand-in-hand with their teachers and staff.

We donned our best smiles, too, as we encouraged the little ones and the teachers and staff with our signs, wishing them well and letting them know we care and want them to succeed. It was a great time at one of our favorite service projects of the year.



Kiwanis Supports Flood Recovery Efforts in Old Elvins

The Kiwanis Club of Farmington was proud to support ongoing flood recovery efforts in the Old Elvins area by presenting a donation to East Missouri Action Agency and the Park Hills Long-Term Recovery Committee.

As Kiwanians, serving our communities is at the heart of what we do. When our neighbors face challenges, we believe in stepping forward to help. Our club was honored to contribute to the recovery effort and support the organizations working tirelessly to assist affected families and coordinate long-term rebuilding efforts.

We were also encouraged to learn that other local service organizations are joining the cause. Through the Rotary Club of St. Francois County's donation challenge, a total of \$3,000 has been raised to date for recovery efforts, with East Missouri Action Agency continuing to accept donations.

The Kiwanis Club of Farmington is grateful for the opportunity to live out the Kiwanis mission of improving the world one child and one community at a time.



Photo caption: Pictured left to right are Holli Ledbetter, member of St. Francois County Rotary, and Jennifer Sikes, president of the Kiwanis Club of Farmington.

Kiwanis Supports CTA Cares Backpack Program

The Kiwanis Club of Farmington was proud to support the Farmington R-7 School District's CTA Cares Backpack Program with a \$1,000 donation. The program helps address food insecurity by providing weekend meals and snacks to approximately 200 local students each week.

At a recent Kiwanis meeting, members learned more about the program and its meaningful impact on children and families throughout the community. The discussion highlighted both the ongoing need for support and the difference the program makes in ensuring students have access to nutritious food when school is not in session.

The donation was made possible through proceeds from the annual Kiwanis Golf Tournament and the generous support of sponsors, participants, and community members who contribute to Kiwanis throughout the year. Their support allows the club to continue investing in programs that improve the lives of local children.

The Kiwanis Club of Farmington is honored to support initiatives like CTA Cares that align with its mission of serving children and strengthening the community. The club is grateful for the dedicated individuals and organizations working to ensure local students have the resources they need to succeed.

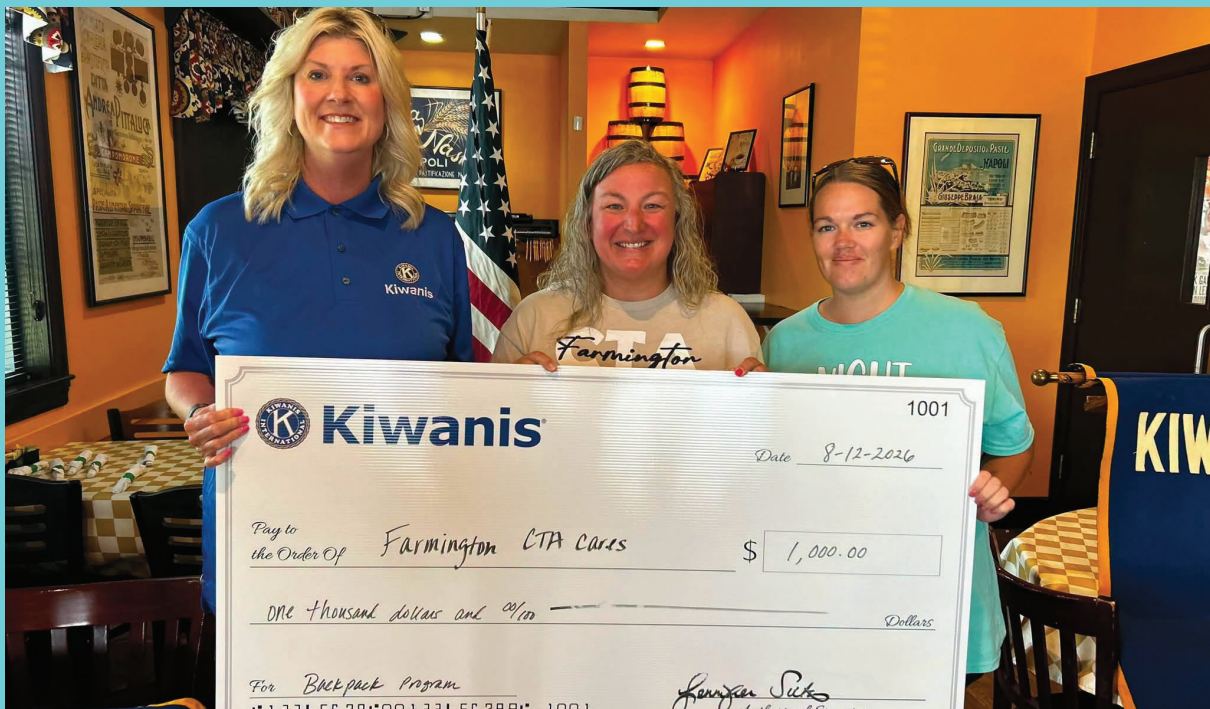


Photo caption: Pictured left to right are Jennifer Sikes, president of the Kiwanis Club of Farmington, and members of the Farmington School District's CTA Cares Backpack Program.

Immaculate Conception Builders Club

The Builders Club at Immaculate Conception (I.C.) School is kicking off a new school year of service to its school and community. It will be exciting to see all the great things this group accomplishes throughout the year. Kate Schroeder is continuing to serve as the Builders Club faculty sponsor. Union Kiwanis Club member Gina Peters is an advisor, along with former I.C. teacher Jane Fox. I.C. Builders Club officers for the 2026–27 year and the club's advisors are shown below.



Photo caption: From left to right: Secretary Reagan Bailey; Vice President Grant Stowe; Union Kiwanis Club Advisor Gina Peters; Advisor and former I.C. teacher Jane Fox; President Elena Brinkmann; and Treasurer Rosie Bardot. Not pictured: Kate Schroeder, I.C. Builders Club faculty sponsor.

Kiwanis Club of Wentzville School Supply Drive

By Melissa Simms

The Kiwanis Club of Wentzville held its school supply drive for the Wentzville School District. The public was very generous with donations of backpacks, notebooks, pencils, folders, and more. The club was able to deliver nearly 700 items for students.

Photo caption: Debra from Wentzville Schools, whose important job is to make sure these supplies get to students in need, is pictured with Melinda Simms from the Kiwanis Club of Wentzville.



Crestwood-Sunset Hills Kiwanis Supports Youth Mental Health

By Lisa Marin, Member, Crestwood-Sunset Hills Kiwanis Club

At a recent meeting, the club heard from Tom Duff of CHADs (Communities Healing Adolescent Depression and Suicide). This group has worked for more than 20 years within schools to educate students and adults and ultimately eliminate teen suicide. The club presented him with a check to continue efforts to improve mental health for youth across the area.



Photo caption: Pictured are Tom Duff and Club President John Sebben.

Springdale Kiwanis Kids Day Football

By Jeanne Harp

Springdale Kiwanis Kids Day Football is alive and well after 73 years. More than 250 first- through fifth-grade boys took part, cheered on by 150 cheerleaders.

Kiwanis members and school coaches led the coaching staff, while high school cheerleaders from Springdale High and Har-Ber High School managed the cheer squads.



Downtown Springfield Kiwanis Club Baseball Camp

By Marsha McClanahan

On July 8, 2026, the Downtown Springfield Kiwanis Club held its annual Baseball Camp for the summer campers of the Boys and Girls Club.

The day gave campers an opportunity to learn, practice, and enjoy the game with Kiwanis volunteers.



Photo captions: Megan Portis and Kristie Weidmann are ready for the campers. Brandon Meyers assists campers in finding the right-size glove. Brandon Meyers, Andrea Swearingen, and Marcia Hildebrand are getting ready for the campers. Springfield Cardinals mascot Louie signed autographs during a pizza party after the camp.

Hot Springs End-of-the-Year Terrific Kids Party

By Deidra Ellison, Club President, Greater Hot Springs Kiwanis Club

This year, the Greater Hot Springs Kiwanis Club hosted its inaugural End-of-the-Year Terrific Kids Party for more than 400 kids from the Hot Springs School District. The event was hosted at beautiful Majestic Park at the end of May.

The students enjoyed wiffle ball, kickball, music, and a face-painting station hosted by high school seniors Victoria Mitchell and Adyson Bennett. Students left with goodie bags full of shirts, Magic Springs passes,

The Terrific Kids were recognized for good character, hard work, and classroom improvement. Special guests included the Arkansas Diamonds cheerleaders and DJ MC for entertainment. Volunteers included the local Sam's Club, which sponsored the event and grilled burgers and hot dogs all day.

Funtrackers passes, coupons to the Alligator Farm, and fidgets. The club's future goal is to expand this annual celebratory park party to the Lake Hamilton and Lakeside School Districts.



St. James Community Tailgate Party

By Maretta Diestelkamp

The Kiwanis Club of St. James participated in the St. James Community Tailgate Party on August 28, 2026. The annual event, hosted by the St. James School District, gives the community an opportunity to learn about local businesses and organizations before enjoying a free hot dog or hamburger meal ahead of the St. James High School football game. The Kiwanis Club table included a display board with pictures of sponsored projects and activities, club information, raffle ticket sales, and, of course, candy. It was fun watching the students try to find their pictures on the display board.



U-Nite at Union Middle School

By Linda Schneider, PR Committee, Kiwanis Club of Union, MO



U-Nite at Union Middle School in Union, MO, was a great opportunity for new students to get information about Builders Club. Members from last year were also able to join again for the new school year.

Pictured from left are Debbie Puls, Kiwanis sponsor for Union Middle School Builders Club (UMSBC), and Tammy Davis, faculty advisor for UMSBC.

Green Forest Diversified Kiwanis teamed up with Huntsville Kiwanis

By Ronda Ray, Green Forest

On Saturday, September 19, Green Forest Diversified Kiwanis teamed up with Huntsville Kiwanis to host a booth at the Hispanic Alliance Independence Day Festival. We offered two games, Plinko and Sucker Pull, for children to enjoy while we visited with community members and shared the ways Kiwanis makes a difference locally.

The event provided a great opportunity to connect with potential new members and celebrate alongside the community. We also enjoyed the festival's delicious food, lively music, and dancing.



The club also participated in Agra Days in Green Forest on September 12, where we had a booth, games, and a Bounce House for the kids to play. We talked to the community about Kiwanis and also programs in the community to help kids as well as had candy and prizes for the kiddos to win.

Thank you Cedar County Kiwanis club for the loan of the bounce house. We appreciated it.



Union Kiwanis Club Honors Member with Hixson Fellowship Award

By Linda Schneider, Union Kiwanis Club

At the September 16 Union Kiwanis Installation meeting, Aaron Hall was honored with the George F. Hixson Fellowship in appreciation of his commitment to serving youth in the community.

Aaron has been a Union Kiwanis Club member since March, 1998. Has served as president of the club and has volunteered for various projects.

For many years Aaron coordinated the Union Kiwanis Angel Tree project. Families in need received gifts donated specifically for their children. Santas (in full costume) along with elves (also in costume) delivered gifts before Christmas. Kiwanis members and friends served as Santas and drivers. Union High School Key Club members and friends served as elves.



Pictured: Union Kiwanis Club member Mike Elliott (left) presenting Aaron Hall the George F. Hixson Fellowship Award. Mike and Aaron have both served as presidents of the Union Kiwanis Club.

With Gratitude

From awards and school supplies to youth programs, hospital support, and community recovery, these stories reflect the heart of Kiwanis: improving the world one child and one community at a time. Thank you to every club, volunteer, contributor, and partner who continues to turn service into lasting connection.

Mound City Kiwanis awarded Earl Collins Foundation Grant to help with Backpack Buddy Program

by Mari Ferguson, Mound City Kiwanis Club

The Mound City Kiwanis group's Backpack Buddy program. The Earl Collins Foundation club grant has helped them with this program!

Mari Ferguson and Beth Graves, elementary school counselor, Mound City R-2. She is our contact person and coordinates the Backpack Buddy program for the school. Some of the food we are able to send home with nine students each Friday.

Pictured below: Mari Ferguson and Tracy Hatfield, Mound City Chapter members. Tracy has graciously provided us a space to store our supplies for the program. Thank you again for awarding us these grant funds to help the youth in our community.



Website Updates

The following member facing Missouri Arkansas District of Kiwanis webpages have been updated in September. Administrative updates are continuously being updated behind the scenes.

-District Directory- <https://k14.site.kiwanis.org/district-directory/>

-Distinguished Club Criteria- <https://k14.site.kiwanis.org/distinguished-club/>

-Dues & New Member Fees- <https://k14.site.kiwanis.org/dues-new-member-fees/>



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Mountain View Area Kiwanis



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