Inspiring Eager Readers

Turn the page to read their stories.
Dear Friends,

This is the time of year when thoughts naturally turn to acts of giving. Yet one of the great things about our community is the spirit of generosity that exists year-round. The gifting of time, talent and treasure is a way of life rather than only an annual celebration for the people, businesses and organizations calling Fort Worth home. From providing professional expertise with board or committee service, to planning and hosting fundraising events, to providing critical financial support for programs and services, acts of giving can be seen everywhere.

We are truly grateful for the many donors and volunteers who have chosen Lena Pope as their avenue to “give back” during 2017.

Studies show that the act of giving to others is associated with numerous mental and physical health benefits. Giving and volunteering lowers blood pressure and stress level, lessens depression, increases self-esteem, leads to greater happiness and has even been associated with a longer life. Which means when people give to Lena Pope, they support our mission of helping create hope, happiness and success for others, and might just see those same benefits manifest in their own life, too.

This issue of Legacy pays tribute to some of you who have given back to the community through service and contributions to Lena Pope this year. It also highlights a few examples of how your generosity is making life better for children and families in North Texas, and shares a few of the ways they still need your support. We hope you’ll feel inspired to include Lena Pope’s programs and services on your “gift list” during this season of giving.

To all our donors and volunteers who have chosen Lena Pope as your avenue to give-back during 2017, many thanks. We appreciate you. And here’s to a hopeful, happy, and successful 2018 for everyone in our community.

With appreciation,

Todd A. Landry, Chief Executive Officer
Reading and Literacy Parade

Research shows a strong connection between a child’s daily independent reading habits and overall school performance. One critical component to youth experiencing the positive benefits of reading is for it to be voluntary. Students need to seek out books and engage in reading by their own volition. Lena Pope’s educational programs are designed to encourage this habit by inspiring eager readers. Activities such as the Reading & Literacy Parade at Lena Pope’s Chapel Hill Academy (CHA) start the literacy process early and make it fun. Students in Pre-K through 2nd grades choose a favorite character from a book and create a costume, or dress as a letter of the alphabet, to celebrate reading.

Also critical to literacy success is access to books in the home. Moreover, home library size is strongly linked to academic achievement. The enhancement is greatest for families with low-earning occupations. Yet more than half of children from economically disadvantaged families in the United States are without access to books in the home.

Schools can help address that issue through lending libraries. The standard guideline to offer a school-based circulating library is maintaining an average of 13 books per student. Lena Pope’s donors and sponsors have ensured students at CHA — where nearly two-thirds of students are from low-income or economically disadvantaged households — have the academic advantage of reading at home thanks to the school’s lending library. As CHA expands to include 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, opportunities exist to help the library continue to expand for the inclusion of higher grade-level reading material. For more information, contact Keegan Hand at 817-255-2616.

CONTENTS

TCU @ ELC 4
Cultural Connection 5
Donor Spotlight 6-7

On the Cover: Angel dresses up as her favorite storybook character.
Texas Christian University’s Women’s Basketball Team recently visited the preschool classes at the Early Learning Center, and it was a slam dunk. The team took advantage of the offseason to share the importance of physical fitness with Lena Pope’s early learners.

TCU’s student athletes led the children in a variety of activities to get their heart rates going. Everyone had a chance to hop like a Horned Frog and got into the athletic spirit with fun T-C-U chants.

The students had a chance to learn perseverance through drills such as skipping to the “coaches” and hopping in relay races, and experienced team-work thanks to games like over-under.

Following the Frog-themed fitness activities, the college ball players contributed to the learning environment by talking to the children about the letters of the alphabet. And of course, they autographed posters and took pictures with their young fans.

Lena Pope’s educational programs are designed to prepare all students for life-long learning, and experiential opportunities such as this special visit from the TCU Women’s Basketball Team help lay the foundation for a college-ready mindset from an early age.
Students from the Tarrant County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP), a partnership between Tarrant County Juvenile Services and Lena Pope, visited the Texas Parks and Wildlife Fish Hatchery for a Cultural Connection field trip in October.

Through the hands-on “Learning How to Fish” experience, participants discovered how to tie knots, properly bait a hook, and safely catch and release fish. With each fish reeled in, staff discussed basic fish biology and informed the students about the different species they caught.

The fishery staff also described electrofishing, a scientific surveying method used to help monitor the population of fish locally, and students had an opportunity to learn about plants during a hike. The Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program is a unique alternative for at-risk youth between the ages of 10 and 18 and their families.

Counties with populations of more than 125,000 in the state of Texas are required to operate JJAEPs. The programs assist youth who have struggled to succeed at their designated neighborhood schools. Participants receive access to academic, behavioral, and therapeutic support services. The program is designed to address the needs of students and families that impact school performance.

While in the program, students work to achieve “merit” status, a progressive process through which they reach a series of benchmarks. Families of students in JJAEP also receive training and support in a variety of areas, including communication skills, problem solving, conflict resolution and daily living skills.

Merit students also have an opportunity to participate in Cultural Connection field trips such as the visit to the hatchery. They provide an opportunity to enhance the learning experience through valuable lessons about the businesses or organizations they visit, and the impact those programs have within the community.

Two or three field trips per-month take students to places such as the Tarrant Area Food Bank and its Community Gardens, the Perot Museum TECH truck, water and recycling plants, local colleges and more.

JJAEP promotes self-sufficiency and self-discipline. Curriculum in the program is aimed at promoting grade-level academic performance and prepares the students for required state testing. Staff also work with students to develop positive classroom behaviors that improve attendance and reduce student dropout rates.

Lena Pope works collaboratively with Tarrant County Juvenile Services to provide the program. Students may come from any school district in Tarrant County and are received by referral. Classes are held on the Lena Pope campus.

JJAEP students experience a positive academic environment where they can excel and build fundamental skills to be successful when they transition back to their home school campuses. For information on how to help youth tackle life’s challenges by supporting Lena Pope, please contact Lynda Gearheart, Director of Development, at 817-255-2606.
It was a “totally tubular time” at Rock the Fort on September 29th. Lena Pope went back to the 80s for this edition of Rock the Fort, presented by SouthWest Auto Group. Guests came decked out in their best throwback gear, and the Shack at Panther Island Pavilion provided the backdrop. Totally awesome tunes for the ultimate dance party were provided by fan fave, the Spazmatics. Frosty Tempel and the Big Boy BBQ Team dished up a rad dinner, followed by sweet treats from Kona Ice, Gypsy Scoops, and the Dough Box.

Lena Pope thanks event co-chairs Nestor Martinez and Nicole Ellis who were, like, righteous. Kudos to the Rock the Fort event committee, the generous sponsors and guests who helped compose an awesome future for the children and families served by Lena Pope.

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It was a brisk day for the 24th Lena Pope Golf Classic on November 3rd at Rockwood Golf Course, but golfers and volunteers still enjoyed the course which recently re-opened following a $5 million renovation. For many of the golfers, playing the new course for the first time in recent years was a nostalgic experience.

Students from Lena Pope’s Chapel Hill Academy serenaded long-time supporter Marty Leonard in celebration of her birthday, and kicked-off the round of play with high fives for the golfers. Righteous Foods, Blue Mesa Grill, Vending Nut Company, Tiff’s Treats, and The Grill sponsored by Frost served-up delicious bites along the course.

Special thanks to members of the Golf Classic Committee, Committee co-chairs Mike Garza and Guy Gagne, the Lena Pope staff and student volunteers, and the sponsors who helped change the course of a child’s life by making the event possible.

Tournament winners Jim Quinn, Trey Farrell, Lamar Haynes and Dan Collins pictured with Lena Pope Board Member Marty Leonard (middle).
SAVE THE DATE

39th Annual Fiesta de Oro

TUESDAY APRIL 24, 2018
JOE T. GARCIA'S

CONNEC

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