



Assistance League® Tulsa

MISSION : Assistance League® volunteers transforming the lives of children and adults through community programs.

September 2021

Volume 47, Issue 2

AL Tulsa Supports Local Foster Families



FOSTERING
connections

Since 2009, Assistance League® Tulsa has worked with Fostering Connections, formerly Tulsa Advocates for the Protection of Children, to improve the lives of abused and neglected children in Tulsa and surrounding counties. By providing essential items to foster families, AL Tulsa helps address the unmet needs of children in the custody of Oklahoma's Department of Human Services.

In August, AL Tulsa participated in *Back 2 School*, a community initiative organized by Fostering Connections to provide school supplies and clothing to children living in foster care. At a kid-friendly event held at the Gathering Place, foster families were able to sign-up to receive selected items from Operation School Bell®. Over fifty foster children were provided school uniforms, shoes and coats through this special event. AL Tulsa is proud that our partnership with Fostering Connections continues to expand to meet the needs of vulnerable children.



← AL Tulsa volunteers attended *Back 2 School* at the Gathering Place to help register foster families to receive school clothing from Operation School Bell®.



Participating foster children received school uniforms, shoes and coats. Throughout the year, AL Tulsa provides Fostering Connections with requested items and Waste Not goods from Bargains Thrift Shop.



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2021-2022**

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Kim Campbell, AL Tulsa president, Sarah Stitt, Oklahoma’s First Lady and Evan Taylor of Fostering Connections at the *Back 2 School* event held at the Gathering Place. School supplies and clothes often prove a financial burden for foster families. A mother of six children, Stitt said, “It’s a huge blessing, when you watch the kids’ faces light up. It’s truly amazing.”

Oklahoma ranks No. 1 in the number of children experiencing two or more adverse childhood experiences at 28.5% of infants to 17-year-olds. Foster children are among the most traumatized. (*Tulsa World* Jan.9, 2020)

Contact Tulsa Child Welfare Department for information about:

- Tulsa Child Abuse and neglect prevention programs
- Improving child welfare in the Tulsa County area
- Identifying the signs of child abuse
- Volunteering as a tutor, mentor or coach
- Child safety services
- Programs for victims of child abuse

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Charity vs. Philanthropy

During the leadership training this summer, I was really impacted by one of the sessions that discussed the difference between charity and philanthropy. Charity is an organization set up to provide help and raise money for those in need-often an immediate, fast response situation. Philanthropy is the desire to promote the welfare of others, expressed especially by the generous donation of money and time to worthy causes. Philanthropy is focused not only on helping people but helping while providing solutions over the long term using a strategic approach.

We have the charity aspect down. We raise money & volunteer our time to meet needs like clothing children, supplying Christmas gifts to seniors, buying bus tokens for Mental Health Association of Oklahoma, and providing new car seats to Fostering Connections, etc. We have also identified long term solutions with some of our programming which speaks to the philanthropy area. For example, to help children's success in school and personal growth, exposing them to many facets of learning is vital. We encourage life-long skills such as literacy (through our book giving), all facets of the arts (through Betty Bradstreet Arts Educations Awards), and most recently our partnership with Tulsa Regional STEM Alliance to enrich those STEM academic skills. These programs not only help children to imagine what possibilities there are for their adult lives but to also give them a place to belong and achieve while they are completing their education.

I believe we are on our way but the speaker did address other notable ideas including attitude, approach and physical environment. She said we should consider how we view ourselves and those we serve. In order to foster community and empower our children and adult clients, we need to think of our relationship as a partnership instead of a "giver" and "taker" scenario. Obviously, there is a difference in our circumstances versus those we hope to help but attitude and our approach should be addressed. Listening is key to both of these. We may not be able to do exactly what is requested but people know when they have been heard. It goes a long way to developing a partnership.

Finally, the physical environment should be appealing. Our facility needs to be maintained, not only with safety in mind but also keeping the surroundings clean, bright, and welcoming. Our Operations committee has been doing a great job and I want to highlight some of what has been put in place over the last several years. It is that committee's job to make any changes to the building inside and outside (if you would like to be a part of those decisions, there is plenty of room on the operations committee & Julie Guy welcomes anyone who is interested.) There has been some major upgrades and repairs to the mechanical areas. We don't see it but they are being done. Last year, technology was addressed and we now have much better performance in the communications area. Visually, you will notice some changes, the office furniture was changed last year and this year Janet Word & Kathy Phillips were asked to freshen up the walls and décor. The items were purchased from Bargains and will be re-donated back when they are changed again for a double monetary impact.

Whether it is charity or philanthropy, Assistance League® Tulsa will be there to help our neighbors. As we are gearing up for Operation School Bell® or greeting our Bargains® customers, I am always amazed at what we can accomplish with a volunteer spirit and heart!

Operation School Bell®

Assistance League® Tulsa

By Julie Burton

School is underway, and we are just days away from starting Operation School Bell®! We have been busy processing shipments, training, and general preparations. Our starting date is **September 14, at 9:00 am!**

Sadly, we will not have children onsite again, but the virus numbers and lack of a vaccine for children just don't allow them to come. Packets have been mailed to the counselors, and we expect to start receiving the student information soon. We are inviting 2,020 students from 40 schools. Once again, the filled bags of clothes will be delivered to the schools.

Masks are strongly encouraged onsite, but not required.

We are trying a pilot program with Collegiate Hall Charter School. They have asked for clothing, but not uniform shirts. We typically don't serve charter schools, but we'll see how this goes. Also, there are 16 elementary schools that either have clothes closets or want to start one, and we will be assisting them where we can as well. Our goal is to stock those closets before school starts next year, rather than at the end of our school season.

Earlier this summer we joined Fostering Connections for a back-to-school event in providing school uniforms to foster children. We estimate that 50 Tulsa school children received clothes, in addition to the families Fostering Connections serves.

SignUp Genius for Operation School Bell® is up and running! Please sign up there to help or contact Julie Burton.

Off-Site Operation School Bell® at Walmart also starts Tuesday, September 14.

If you have questions or need help using SignUp Genius, please contact Loretta Raschen, lraschen@cox.net or al@altulsa.org Attn: Loretta



Did
you
know?

Last Year, Operation School Bell® . . .

Served 20,577 students from 105 schools in 12 districts.

Including . . .

1,265 TPS elementary students

1,436 elementary students from outlying districts

16,000 uniform shirts to 41 TPS elementary schools

2,050 TPS junior high & high school students

And . . . distributed 5,402 books to children

OSB plans to serve even more students in 2021 - 2022! CAN YOU HELP?



Tulsa

President: Kim Campbell
Newsletter Editor: Marianne Pickering

www.altulsa.org



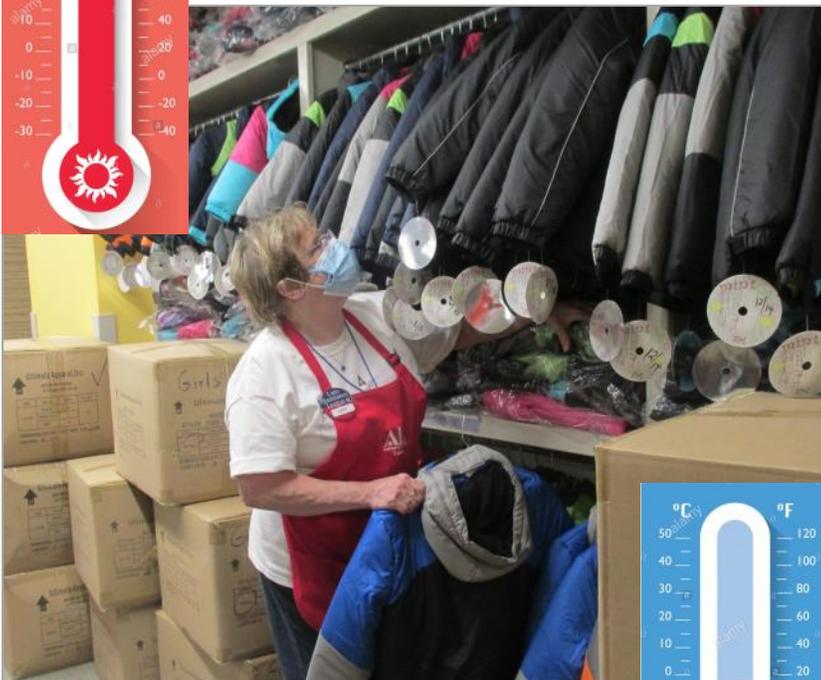
Assistance League® Tulsa

A chapter of National Assistance League®

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Our weather is **HOT** now, but **COLD** temperatures will soon be here. Operation School Bell® supplies coats and other essential items to thousands of local children who might otherwise go without.

Our Values

Commitment

showing compassion for all

Accountability

being fiscally responsible to our donors & our community

Leadership

demonstrating professionalism that is visionary & ethical

Respect

appreciating & considering others

Self-esteem

enhancing success in the people we serve