

Optimist Club of Birmingham

The Flagship Club of the
Alabama-Mississippi District
December 2022

In our 95th Year of Service to
Youth & the Community

Meets 2nd Thursday
City Club
12:00 Noon

www.birmingham.amoptimists.org
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BirminghamOptimistClub@gmail.com

The January 19th, 12 noon, meeting will take place at City Club, 1901 6th Ave N, Ste 3100, Birmingham. Reservations are required by Friday, January 13th.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: The meal cost is \$27/person. If you make a reservation and do not show, then an invoice will be sent to you to cover the cost of your meal, which the Club is charged for whether or not you attend.

JANUARY 19TH CLUB MEETING

Our guest speaker will be **Jacque Fazekas**, Founder of Bama Health Foods, the local natural health food store that serves people in under-resourced food desert communities in Birmingham who are skeptical or have poor medical care yet seek to improve their chronic illnesses.

Having always battled health issues of her own throughout the years, Ms. Fazekas has had to seek natural solutions beyond medical solutions. She became a certified health coach in 2018 after leaving a long retail career to help others discover how to be naturally well. She is passionate about providing for others with limited access to these natural solutions and believes that everyone is worthy of good health.

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Christmas Luncheon Committee Co-Chairs **Deborah Dickinson, Nancy Ryan, & Sharon Wilson**, worked together to provide an excellent program for all who attended!

Members and guests enjoyed musical entertainment both before and during the program, provided by a string trio, featuring senior students from the **Alabama School of Fine Arts**, including **Erin Wass** on violin, **Igrainne Hill** on cello, and **Dianna Nazarenko** on viola.

Our guest speaker was **Major (Dr.) Susan McElroy**, a corps officer/pastor with **The Salvation Army**, who has served in communities across the Southeast for 25 years. Along with her husband, Major Bret McElroy, she is presently serving as the pastor of The Salvation Army Birmingham 614 Church. Susan holds an Ed.D. from Liberty University in Education and uses her background in education to help teach individuals in our community, who are struggling, to improve life skills, obtain employment, strengthen their faith, and become self-sufficient again. She is the mother of three sons and in her spare time she enjoys reading, photography and spending time with her family.

We were honored to have **Tanjanika Latham**, Manager of Resource Development with **Jefferson County DHR**, with us to receive the 25 Christmas gift cards valued at \$150 each presented for foster youth (ages 19-21) served through the Independent Living Program. A special thank you goes to **Blue Cross – Blue Shield's, The Caring Foundation**, for their generous support in helping the **Birmingham Optimist Youth Foundation** provide these gift cards through our "Kards for Kids" Christmas Campaign!

Membership Chair / Zone 1 Lt. Gov. Leon Evans conducted the induction ceremony for our new member, **Bettie Bell**, who is sponsored by **Angene Coleman**. We are pleased to officially welcome you to the Club, Bettie!!

The Club was also blessed to have other special guests at this event including, **AL-MS District Governor Vera Hendrix**, along with **Ra'Jeeni Marshall**, & **Monithia Smith**, daughter & niece of **President Carolyn McCoy**; and **Ron Hall & Beverly Harris**, guests of **Zone 1 Lt. Gov. Leon Evans**, and **Mary Smith**, guest of **Dewayne Smith**. Thank you to **Deborah Dickinson & Sharon Wilson** for providing door prizes for the event!

To top off the meeting, Club members were invited to bring unwrapped toys for children and/or to consider making a contribution to The Salvation Army! Thank you to everyone for your support of this organization that does so much for those who are in need in our community throughout the year!

MEMBER NEWS

December Birthdays: 5th – Anita Lee, 17th – Adrienne Pearson; **Anniversaries:** 15th – Jon & Nancy Ryan

Hope you each enjoyed your special day!

Please note: If your birthday and/or anniversary was not included, please email the dates to Nancy Ryan at nryan95@charter.net, so they can be added to the list!!

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 12 – Board of Directors Meeting, 1 pm
January 19 – Club Meeting at City Club, 12 noon
February 16 – Club Meeting at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 12 noon, featuring reading of the top 3 winning essays from our Scholarship Contest. Please note: This will be on the 3rd Thursday of the month.

SALVATION ARMY BELL RINGERS

The Optimist Club of Birmingham carried out our long-time tradition of "Ring the Bells" for the Salvation Army at Christmas time on Tuesday, November 29, and Thursday, December 1, at a new location for us, Belk at The Summit, which was very successful! We were able to raise a total of \$708.11 for the Salvation Army on those two days combined! Thank you to our volunteers, which included: **Leon Evans, Herb Forsythe, Ken Holcomb, Anita & Rudy Lee, Carolyn McCoy, Vanessa Miles (cousin of Carolyn McCoy), Adrienne Pearson, Jon & Nancy Ryan, & Ron Taylor**. Thank you also to **Erma Hinton** who had signed up to volunteer but was unable to do so due to illness.



SNAPSHOTS FROM THE OPTIMIST CLUB OF BIRMINGHAM CHRISTMAS SEASON!!!

Birmingham Optimists were honored to carry on our long-time tradition of “Ringing the Bells” for The Salvation Army at our new location, Belk at The Summit, on November 29th & December 1st!

December 8th Christmas Luncheon



Ron Taylor, Anita Lee & Adrienne Pearson



Don & Debbie Kirkland assist Major Susan McElroy with the unwrapped toys & monetary contributions for The Salvation Army from Club members and guests



Rudy & Anita Lee and Ron Taylor



“Kards for Kids” Chair Nancy Ryan presents Christmas gift cards valued at \$150 each for 25 foster youth served through DHR, to Tanjanika Latham



President Carolyn McCoy thanks AL-MS District Gov. Vera Hendrix for joining us at our Christmas Luncheon



Ron Taylor turns “The Bells” over to Jon & Nancy Ryan and Ken Holcomb



Alabama School of Fine Arts string trio, featuring senior students, Erin Wass on violin, Igrainne Hill on cello, and Dianna Nazarenko on viola, provided beautiful classical and Christmas music for our Club members and guests!



Herb Forsythe



Leon Evans & Carolyn McCoy with Carolyn’s cousin, Vanessa Miles



Bettie Bell, receives her membership pin from her sponsor, Angene Coleman, following her induction ceremony conducted by Membership Chair Leon Evans. President Carolyn McCoy joins in welcoming and congratulating our newest member!

SNAPSHOTS FROM THE OPTIMIST CLUB OF BIRMINGHAM CHRISTMAS SEASON!!!



Bettie Bell & Angene Coleman



Monithia Smith & Ra'Jeeni Marshall



President Carolyn McCoy & Christmas Program Co-Chair Nancy Ryan thank guest speaker Major Susan McElroy for her excellent presentation



Adrienne Pearson & Sandra Weems



Danella Johnson



President Carolyn McCoy with daughter, Ra'Jeeni Marshall, & niece, Monithia Smith



Mary & Dewayne Smith



Teresa & Michael Jones



Sandra Weems, Tanjanika Latham, Adrienne Pearson & Danella Johnson