Community Leadership

Daryl Fontenot – Citizen of the Year
Making a difference – right here in Baytown and Mont Belvieu

While COVID-19 posed numerous challenges for face-to-face volunteering, our employees continued to find ways to safely lend a hand in our community. Baytown Area employees volunteer thousands of hours in support of more than 200 local non-profit organizations in the community. Whether we are assisting United Way agencies through virtual Days of Caring, joining together with community members to serve at Hearts and Hands of Baytown, or reading to students from local elementary schools through our Partners in Education Virtual Bookworm Club program, giving back to our community is a core value.
EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES

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SUMMER & FALL REGISTRATION STARTS APRIL 6*

www.lee.edu/registration

*APRIL 6 SUMMER
Registration for All Students

APRIL 6 FALL
Registration for students who have successfully completed at least 30 credits at Lee College

APRIL 13 FALL
Registration for All Students
Founded in 1948, the Service League of Baytown is an organization committed to fostering interest in the social, economic, educational, civic, and cultural conditions of the community.

The Service League’s primary service is vision and hearing screening for all kindergarten, first, third, fifth, and seventh graders in Goose Creek CISD, Barbers Hill ISD, St. Joseph, Chinquapin Preparatory School and Baytown Christian Academy.

All members of the League are state-certified vision and hearing screeners.

League members also volunteer once a month calling bingo and providing prizes of common house hold items to fixed income senior citizens at the J.D. Walker Community Center.

They serve as docents at the Baytown Historical Museum giving educational tours to all third-grade GCCISD students and host bi-annual birthday parties for students at Chinquapin Preparatory School, as well as an end-of-year graduation party.

Each Christmas the Service League adopts up to three needy families from our community and provides gifts, meals and items for the holiday.

The Service League’s primary source of funding for these community programs has been the annual Charity Ball, initiated in 1965. It is only through the support of the community that allows the League to continue serving and helping others, one hundred percent of funds raised and donated remain in the local community.

Board of Directors
2020-2021
Brandi Rodriguez- President
Melisa Quinones- President Elect
Chrissa Teel- Vice President
Gigi Cockrell- Treasurer
Greta Ludwig-Recording Secretary
Rhonda Smart- Corresponding Secretary
Cassie Daniel- Projects
Rose Pfitzner- Fundraiser Chairman
Sarah Castleberry- Past President
Kacie Fivecoat- Board Member at Large

Late 2020, Service League hosted their Annual Christmas Brunch! Many life members attended and celebrated.
The club wishes to thank Greta Matson Ludwig for organizing the Christmas Family Project! Two very deserving families were blessed at Christmas!
OPTIMIST CLUB OF BAYTOWN

The Optimist movement began when the Optimist Club of Indianapolis, IN was formed in May 1916. A total of 11 clubs held a convention in Louisville, KY and formed Optimist International on June 19, 1919. The Baytown Optimist Club was chartered in April, 1954.

2021 BAYTOWN OPTIMIST YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE

AGES: *7-8-9-10-11-12

EARLY REGISTRATION DATE:
- SUNDAY APRIL 18 & 25
- Regular Sign Up Dates - To be announced
- First Game is Sept. 11th, Super Bowl is Oct. 30th
- All Games played at R.E.L.
Super Bowl Played at Stallworth Stadium

TIME: 1-3 P.M.
Place: BAYTOWN OPTIMIST CLUB
1724 MARKET STREET
BAYTOWN, TX 77520
FEE: $60 (Equipment not included)
NO REFUNDS

- TEAMS WILL BE 20 PLAYERS PER TEAM
- PLAYERS WILL BE PLACED ON TEAMS BY AGE

REQUIREMENTS FOR REGISTRATION:
- BIRTH CERTIFICATES REQUIRED FOR ALL PLAYERS
- PROOF OF RESIDENCY (TDL OR UTILITY BILL)
- ALL PLAYERS MUST SIGN UP IN PERSON AT THE OPTIMIST CLUB ON THE ABOVE DATES
- ALL PLAYERS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A PARENT OR GUARDIAN
  - NO PHONE REGISTRATIONS
  - NO LATE SIGN UPS
  - AGE AS OF SEPTEMBER 1ST
  - NO REGISTRATION FEE FOR CHEERLEADERS
  - LOCAL COVID PROCEDURES WILL BE ENFORCED

Kathryn Saenger
Club President
Proudly serving the Optimist Club of Baytown

Jose Peña
Past Club President
Proudly serving the Optimist Club of Baytown

Faith Community Hospice LLC
Kathy Anderson
Community Liaison
2020 Baytown Sun
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2015 DADS Survey No Deficiencies

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We’ve had you covered 100 years in World Wars, Tragedies, Hurricanes, Floods and now the Coronavirus
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The Optimist movement began when the Optimist Club of Indianapolis, IN was formed in May 1916. A total of 11 clubs held a convention in Louisville, KY and formed Optimist International on June 19, 1919. The Baytown Optimist Club was chartered in April, 1954.

**The Optimist’s Creed**

*Promise yourself*

To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.

To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.

To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.

To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.

To think only of the best, to work only for the best and to expect only the best.

To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.

To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.

To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.

To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.

To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

**Optimist Projects “Friends of Youth”**

Youth Football  
Christmas Party with the Lions Club  
Welcome Stranger Program  
Thanksgiving Feed  
Working with Habitat for Humanity  
Helping with Poinsettia Sales  
International Junior Golf Championships  
Working with students from Mary Institute & St. Louis Country Day School on Spring Break  
Working with Keep Baytown Beautiful Oratorical Essay Contest Trash Off  

**DEDICATED Optimist Members**

**SHERRY WHITE & STAN WHITE**

*MEMBER SINCE -1992*

Past President  
First Lady President of Club  
Past SETX District Chairman

*MEMBER SINCE -1984*

Past President  
Past SETX District Chairman  
Past SETX Lt. Governor  
Past SETX Governor

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- **1977-1978**  
  Allen Johnson - Distinguished Governor

- **1998-1999**  
  Billy Higginbothum

- **2001-2002**  
  Vernon Hayes

- **2003-2004**  
  Stan White

**PAST INTL. VICE PRESIDENT**

- **1981-1982**  
  Allen Johnson

**OVER 30 YEARS’ SERVICE**

- Pi-Yi Mayo
- Stan White
Mission of Lions Clubs International

Lions Clubs International is dedicated to helping those less fortunate in their communities and around the world. Cutting across all national, racial and cultural boundaries, activities have included sight conservation and work with the visually impaired, youth programs including drug education and prevention and volunteer programs, diabetes detection and research and work for international cooperation and understanding.

Baytown Lions Club Mission

The Baytown Lions Club is dedicated to serving the less fortunate in our community through charitable programs focused primarily on the youth in the Baytown area.

We are committed to providing scholarships to graduating seniors in the local high schools each year to students in need of financial help to attend college.

We are committed to sponsoring children with disabilities to attend summer camp at the Texas Lions Camp in Kerrville, Texas. We are committed to providing financial support for the camp through a portion of our membership dues and the purchase of lifetime memberships in honor or memory of our members. We support many other local and international charitable programs that are in keeping with the Lions Club International mission.

Flags Across Baytown

The club is currently displaying about 800 flags across Baytown. Approximately 16 Lions Club volunteers are actively involved in the flag program each holiday period.

To volunteer or to join the Lions, call Dwayne Litteer at 832-556-8257.
Lion’s Club International

The world’s largest service club association, Lions Clubs International has 1.4 million members in more than 46,000 clubs in approximately 210 countries and geographical areas. Lions are men and women who volunteer their time to humanitarian causes. Founded in 1917, our motto is “We Serve”.

Texas Lions Camp

Texas Lions Camp is a residential camping facility for children with physical disabilities, type 1 diabetes and cancer. The Camp is located on over 500 acres in the beautiful Texas Hill Country, and is designed to introduce the “Can Do” philosophy to children dealing with special medical conditions.

Children with special needs from all over the State of Texas are invited to attend one of 9 weeks, which we hope will become one of their life-long childhood memories. A week designed for fun, exploration and challenge.

Texas Lions Camp Mission

The primary purpose of the Camp is to provide, without charge, a camp for physically disabled, hearing/vision impaired, and diabetic children from the State of Texas, regardless of race, religion, or national origin. Our goal is to provide an atmosphere wherein campers will learn the “Can Do” philosophy and be allowed to achieve maximum personal growth and self-esteem.

The Texas Lions Camp is recognized as a non-profit corporation, under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code. The Camp is accredited by the American Camping Association, and is licensed by the Texas Department of Health.

Texas Lions Camp History

The Texas Lions Camp was chartered in 1949 in response to the terrible polio epidemic that forever changed the lives of so many Texas children. Since that time, the Texas Lions Camp has dynamically changed to include children who have all manner and types of physical disabilities, diabetes and cancer.
Baytown Junior Forum was organized in the summer of 1964 and has been diligently servicing Baytown and the surrounding communities since this time. BJF’s mission is to make a difference in the lives of children, families, and the elderly. Its volunteers work tirelessly to fulfill the mission through service work, their “Strength Through Service” grant program and yearly scholarships to deserving graduating seniors.

Baytown Junior Forum assists many of the local non-profit service organizations to help fulfill their missions as well. BJF has provided volunteers for organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, The Fred Aguilar Promise Center, YMCA, The Art League of Baytown’s Miracle Stars, Bay Area Homeless Services, Emma’s Hugs, Focused Care, Special Rodeo, and the Baytown Special Olympics. In addition, BJF also runs their own service, Goodfellows Toy Program. Each year Goodfellows Toy Program provides two age specific toys to underprivileged children from birth through 10 years of age. In 2019, Goodfellows provided toys to more than 1000 children from 437 different families.

Baytown Junior Forum also helps local non-profits through their grant program. For the past five years, BJF has conducted a Designer Purse Bingo fundraiser to fund its grant program. 100 percent of the profits raised from this fundraiser is given out to local non-profits to aide them in fulfilling various projects within the Baytown community. The success of this fundraiser allowed BJF to grant over $35,000 in grants in 2019 alone.

Baytown Junior Forum is comprised of 30 active members and many sustaining members. Each of these ladies donate thousands of volunteer hours each year. It is such a privilege to each volunteer to be able to assist those in our community who most need their love and attention. Baytown Junior Forum hopes that they will be able to continue, through community support and eager volunteers, for many more years.
Join us in celebrating 75 years of driving positive impact and change in the greater Baytown and Chambers County areas.

Make Your $75 gift today!
And receive a commemorative sticker with your donation to proudly display your support all year long.

For more information call Traci Dillard at 832-926-4005 or email tracid@unitedwaygbacc.org

unitedwaygbacc.org
Proud Partners in Education with Alamo Elementary School

Find Waldo! Actually find Past President Linda behind the K and Secretary Renee Behind the W.

Peggy Loggins
Retired GCCISD Librarian
Proud to Serve

John McMillon
Retired Lee College Professor
Proud to Serve

From left standing Tina Martinez, Vice President; Renee’ Rhodes, Secretary; Chad Merling, Asst. Secretary; Lowell Westerman, Treasurer
Seated from left Renea Dillon, President Elect; Sandy Denson, President
Absent from photo are Linda Kelly, Past President and Stacie Fulton, Asst. Treasurer
The Kiwanis Club of Baytown boasts a membership of over 60 members and has a substantial presence in the community of Baytown.

The Kiwanis Club of Baytown embraces the Kiwanis mission of

"Changing the World One Child and One Community At A Time."

The motto of Kiwanis is

"Serving the Children of the World."

We fulfill our mission and club motto through the sponsorship of five high school Key Clubs and one elementary K-Kids Club. We are also the partner of Alamo Elementary through the Baytown Chamber of Commerce Partners in Education program, having won the title of Partner of the Year twice in the past ten years.

We also support our mission through community service, fund raising, membership, spiritual development and other sponsored youth activities.

BaytownKiwanis.com

Linda Kelley
Past Club President
Proud to Serve

Linda Krisher
Broker/Owner/CRS
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Supporting our community through:
- Scholarships for graduating seniors
- Sponsorship of Robert E. Lee High School Key Club
- Sponsorship of Ross S. Sterling High School Key Club
- Sponsorship of Goose Creek Memorial High School Key Club
- Sponsorship of Baytown Christian Academy Key Club
- Sponsorship of the Barbers Hill High School Key Club
- Partner in Education Alamo Elementary
- Baytown Habitat for Humanity
- Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 922
- Emma’s Hugs
- Children’s Diabetes Foundation

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Proud community partner!
Many Pilot members and several officers were unable to attend the Officer installation ceremony because of the Coronavirus pandemic, but were included via a virtual Zoom online meeting. Attending and pictured - seated from left are Vice President Kerri Hurlbut, 2021-2022 President Susan Pitts and Treasurer Allene DonCarlos. Standing from left are 2019-2020 Texas District Governor and installing officer Gail Wilson, Pilot Community Service Leader Delores Ellis, Patriotism Area Co-Leader Cindy Nettles, Corresponding Secretary & Health & Safety Leader Carolyn Parrish, Anchor Coordinator Susan Passmore, members Gay Riggs and Celia Johnson and Director & Past President Cindy Fehring.

Not pictured were officers installed via Zoom or later - President-Elect Clarissa Martinez, Directors Nancy Mann, Judy Wheat, Tammy Phenicie, Glenda Mosley and Recording Secretary Terry Presley.
The Pilot Club of Baytown, Inc. is a non-profit service organization of about 50 members, with a goal for service to the community.

Pilot Club of Baytown, chartered in 1949, is a Texas district club of Pilot International (PI), a worldwide service organization.

PI was founded in Macon, Georgia, in 1921. Riverboat Pilots of the early 1900s are the inspiration for the name, as these pilots were admired for their ability to steer a “true course” through challenging conditions and obstacles.

Christmas Tour of Homes Fundraiser in 2020 was put on hold because of the pandemic. We hope to revive this popular tradition in 2021. In 2019 beautiful homes were offered by Dean & Gena Hutto, Wes & Kathy Winn, Shane & Kathi Claussen, & Glenn & Stefani Lemelle.

Celebrating 70 years of service, the planned “Pilot 2020 Yellow Rose Gala - Boots & Bling” was not held because of the pandemic. We may not have a gala in April. We hope to have it later in the year as things feel safe. The beautiful Sylvan Beach Pavilion in La Porte has been our destination for years. All proceeds to into Pilot’s community projects. The health and safety of Pilots and guests are our highest priority. Date of the gala will be announced as soon as it is safe.

Pilot Clubs around the world promise to “DO MORE, CARE MORE, BE MORE” for those in need. Pilots continue with a primary focus on brain health and safety with such projects as Alzheimer’s, dementia and traumatic brain injuries. Using puppets, Pilots also teach brain protection to children and the elderly through Pilot Brainminders® Programs. Pilot schedules programs in the high schools to teach students about consequences of drinking and driving with Sean Carter, “When Sean Speaks, Inc.” Sean, unable to walk or talk, gives personal experiences to students of the possible results of drinking and driving – talking with the voice of his computer.

Pilot Club of Baytown has organized the annual Baytown Walk to End Alzheimer’s, a satellite Walk for the Houston Alzheimer’s Association, raising over $709,326 since its inception. The Pilot Lifeline Program, an emergency response system for homebound residents has recently disbanded.

Pilots award over $17,500 toward student scholarships and educational programs each year. Pilot sponsors a Patriotism Essay contest for 5th graders in the Baytown schools. Pilots support and participate in many other projects important to the community.

Texas Pilot Clubs across the State work together - Friendships have strengthened over the years by participating together in many challenging projects. The Baytown Club sponsored numerous Texas Pilot clubs still active – San Jacinto Pilot Club, Evening Baytown Pilot Club, West Chambers County Pilot Club and Pilot Club of Odessa.

Baytown Pilot Club sponsored an Anchor Club in October 2018 with the IMPACT Early College High School. Seventeen students became charter members. 2019-2020 membership were 72 Anchors. Anchor Club is a youth service organization, with clubs around the world giving back to serve their communities.

For information about Pilot Club or for joining Pilot as a volunteer, call 281-424-7838, like our Facebook Page or visit the local Pilot website: http://www.pilotclubofbaytown.org/
Texas District website: http://www.pitexasdistrict.org/
Pilot International website: http://www.pilotinternational.org/
The purpose of Pilot’s service focus is to promote awareness of brain-related disorders and to improve the lives of those affected -- through education, prevention programs, volunteer activities, financial support, and research.

Six general categories of brain disorders are:
- Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI): Head injuries caused by accidents.
- Developmentally Disabled: Congenital brain disorders such as learning disabilities and mental retardation.
- Chemical Dependency: Alcohol and drug-related illnesses, including Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and infants born with an addition to drugs.
- Diseases which cause dementia (loss of intellectual functions): Alzheimer’s Disease, Multi-Infarct Dementia, Parkinson’s Disease, Huntington’s Disease, Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, Pick’s Disease, Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus.
- Mental and Emotional Disorders: Schizophrenia, chronic depression, and mental illnesses.
- Other Brain Disorders: Brain tumors, neuromuscular diseases, strokes, and disorders caused by over medication.
Pilot International is an innovative volunteer service organization that does more than just have meetings and provide networking opportunities with friends and associates. Pilot members take an active part in making communities a better place to live ...

PROJECTS: Higher Ground Camp, Mountain High Camp, Circle of Friends, BrainMinders, Flags on Veteran’s Graves each Memorial Day, Project Graduation, Annual Scholarships, Flags for Mont Belvieu City Complex, Bicycle Helmets, School Supplies, “Support our Soldiers”, Playground Equipment for City Park

SERVICE: Veteran’s Day Program, Barbers Hill Fall Fest, Adopt Families for Christmas, Breakfast with Santa, Community Easter Egg Hunt, Special Olympics, Relay for Life, Alzheimer’s Walk, Teacher Appreciation, Nurse Appreciation, School Board Appreciation, Police Memorial Week, Firefighters Recognition, July 4th Celebration at City Park

The West Chambers County Pilot Club annual Gala is in the planning stages and may look a little different due to the pandemic, but the good works continue.

Funds raised by the Gala help with all the projects the Pilot Club does throughout the coming year. Some of the projects the Pilot Club has supported in the past includes helping to purchase a wheel chair accessible van for Chambers County, supporting the Barbers Hill High School Anchor Club, awarding annual scholarships to High School Seniors, presenting the “BrainMinders™” Buddies program with the Anchor Club to Barbers Hill Kindergarten Center and Elementary schools, annually donating school supplies to Barbers Hill ISD, and donating bicycle safety helmets at community events throughout the year.

The club does phenomenal work for the community and has raised funds in the past to help purchase three handicap accessible playground swings for Barbers Hill ISD, one for the Kindergarten Center, Primary and Elementary schools and also helps the City of Mont Belvieu with the annual Easter Egg Hunt, July 4th celebration, Christmas in the City and by donating Special Needs playground equipment to the Mont Belvieu City park. The Club also helps with Old River/Winfree Founders Day.

The Club supports the Texas District Pilot Club’s Traumatic Brain Injury camps, purchased a trained service dog for a wounded warrior, donated Children’s Literacy workstations to the Sam and Carmena Goss Memorial Branch Library and provided scholarships for adult students with mild to moderate cognitive delays in the “Rising Stars Art Program” through the Baytown Art League.

The club has also contributed funds to help with obtaining equipment for the Special Olympics in our community.

More projects were added the past few years including donating to Barbers Hill High School for the ImPact (Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing) program that was started at the High School, the program is the most scientifically validated computerized test used by more than 7,400 High Schools to help evaluate and manage suspected concussions, and by donating scholarships to Eagle Pointe for the Swim Starfish program, the program provides individual swim lessons to children with special needs. The Club has also donated to the Chambers County Meals on Wheels.

For more information contact W.C.C.P.C. at P.O. Box 1032, Mont Belvieu, Texas 77580, Email wccpilotclub@gmail.com, contact any West Chambers County Pilot Club member or call 832-597-0390.

Members of West Chambers County Pilot Club attended the 2019 Barbers Hill Fall Fest. Members gave out candy and 144 bicycle safety helmets. Their booth won the best Non-profit booth at the festival.

From left are West Chambers County Pilot Club President Chelsea George, Director Jan Jones, President-Elect Angela Fackler, Past-President Marla Van Pelt, Susan Hudnall and Cheryl Ledet.

Oct 25, 2019 from The Baytown Sun archives
Community Leadership

OF BAYTOWN

Pictured above are just a few of the newest Rotarians participating in the club meetings virtually or giving their individual classification speech.

At left, Past President Sheila Crawford received the presidential citation from Past District 5890 Governor Gary Gillen for her year of service.

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Dr. Lynda Villanueva
President

Lee College
Office of the President

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Proud community partner!
The Object of Rotary is to “encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise.” Rotary is a service organization. Since 1910, the Rotary Motto has been “Service Above Self.” Rotary strives to achieve its objective of “Service Above Self” through activities in four primary areas. These are often referred to as the Four Avenues of Service.

Club Service
This “Avenue” promotes the development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service. It involves the activities necessary to make the Club function successfully and achieve its goals.

Vocational Service
This area represents the opportunity that each Rotarian has to represent the dignity and utility of one’s vocation as an opportunity to serve society. Rotarians promote and foster high ethical standards in business and professions and promote the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations.

Community Service
This “Avenue” relates to the activities that Rotarians undertake to improve the quality of life in their community. Particular emphasis is given to helping children, needy families, the aged, the handicapped, and those most in need of assistance. Rotarians strive to promote the ideal of service in their personal, business, and community lives.

International Service
In this area, Rotarians strive for the advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service.

The club normally meets Wednesdays at noon inside the Baytown Community Center. During the Coronavirus challenge, they meet virtually. To join Rotary, ask any Rotarian.

Rotary club membership represents a cross-section of the community’s business and professional men and women. The world’s Rotary clubs meet weekly and are nonpolitical, nonreligious, and open to all cultures, races and creeds.

The main objective of Rotary is service — in the community, in the workplace and throughout the world.

Rotarians develop community service projects that address many of today’s most critical issues, such as children at risk, poverty and hunger, the environment, illiteracy, and violence.

They also support programs for youth, educational opportunities and international exchanges for students, teachers, and other professionals, and vocational and career development.

The Rotary motto is “Service Above Self”.

Rotary, along with our partners, has reduced polio cases by 99.9 percent worldwide since our first project to vaccinate children in the Philippines in 1979. We are close to eradicating polio.
One of the great assets of the Greater Baytown community is the spirit of giving and support for all our citizens. That spirit is exemplified in the Rotary Club of Baytown. Founded in 1928, this is the club’s 93rd year of existence. Dr. Tom Kelchner, the Rotary Club’s 93rd President says: “Our Rotary Club has an incredible legacy in our community. Each year, because of the generosity of our members and our community members, we are able to donate approximately $150,000.00 to various educational organizations, service programs, disaster relief organizations and international projects”. The Rotary Club of Baytown supports these projects and programs primarily through monies raised at our annual Shrimp & Catfish Festival. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the 2020 festival was canceled. However, the club is confident that a successful event will be held in July. President-elect Melissa Reabold, the festival coordinator says, “We are excited to move forward with plans for hosting the event on July 10, 2021. This year’s event will be held at the Houston Raceway Park powered by Pennzoil. It is a fun time with great food, music, and raffle prizes as well as live and silent auctions”. The Club will follow CDC and local health authority guidance for hosting large gatherings. If an in-person event cannot be held, the Club will still hold the raffle, with a vehicle as the top prize. There are several civic clubs in our community. Many promote volunteerism, fundraising and are active in service projects that improve the community. To do this, it entails engagement of members of the club and community, fundraising, and a plan for fund distribution that aligns with each club’s mission. Like other organizations, the civic clubs have suffered during this pandemic. Clubs that have always enjoyed the fellowship provided through club meetings, events and service projects have had to meet virtually. Fundraising that benefits the community has been limited. Everyone is aware of the problems the pandemic is creating, yet there is still hope for tomorrow when there are no restrictions on our interactions and normalcy returns. You are welcome to join The Rotary Club of Baytown in its efforts to raise much needed funds for the various projects. You can visit the Club’s website at www.baytownrotary.org to learn more, get connected to a meeting or to support the annual Shrimp & Catfish Festival. The Rotary Club of Baytown, with the safety and well-being of our members and guests in mind, is offering in-person meetings with a virtual option. The club meets every Wednesday from 12:00 p.m.to 1:00 p.m. Contact Tom Kelchner at tom@empowerednetwork.us for more details.

Dr. Tom Kelchner
President
Rotary Club of Baytown
Dr. Lynda Villanueva
Lee College president: Baytown a good fit

Lee College President Dr. Lynda Villanueva will never forget the first time her middle school teacher told her she had a gift for reading.

As a struggling student who endured years of abuse and the stress of constantly moving from city to city as a child, education gave her an exhilarating hope for the future.

“Somehow, in the chaos of my childhood, I was exposed to people who saw something in me. That something was a desire for a better life, a voice waiting to speak to others, and a spark ready to be struck into a flame,” Villanueva said.

That same belief and compassion is what eventually led her to become the tenth President of Lee College. And it is why she has dedicated her entire career to helping students succeed, especially those who are traditionally underserved in the community.

Dr. Villanueva has only been President of Lee College and a resident of Baytown for just over a year, but what a crucial year it has been. Through it all, her bold and innovative leadership style has kept student success at the forefront and community safety at the helm.

“This first year as president has been overwhelming but gratifying at the same time,” said Villanueva.

Within her first 90 days as President, a pandemic was declared, and Lee College was forced to move most of its courses online. For many students in the community, their world was completely turned upside down.

“I’m a big advocate of never letting a crisis go to waste, and we never did. I know other organizations and other colleges that have just said, ‘let’s hide under this rock and wait.’ But when I asked the College to lean into this pandemic with me, they exceeded my expectations. It is remarkable what we have been able to do.”

Under Dr. Villanueva’s leadership, Lee College established the Lee Cares portal to give students an online tool for requesting help with everything from tutoring to food assistance and technology needs. Since then, Lee Cares has awarded more than $2 million to students for help with everyday essentials like food, housing, childcare and medical expenses.

Lee College offered free tuition during Summer 2020 and partnered with local school districts to provide free tuition for 2020 graduates for the fall semester. The result was a 41% increase in enrollment in the summer and an overall 1% increase in headcount for the fall. This is a significant contrast to the 9.5% decrease in enrollment the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center is reporting for community colleges across the country. Dual enrollment at local high schools also increased by 18% over the year prior.

Villanueva also oversaw the launch of Lee College’s Real Life, Real Learning campaign that allowed students to take courses in four different ways: online, hybrid, face-to-face, and Lee Streams which offered in-person experience without safety concerns of face-to-face learning. Multiple start dates for the fall semester also allowed more people to begin classes when it was convenient for them.

The first-time President’s biggest eye-opener was that many students are just one crisis away from losing everything. Colleges must serve the whole student fundamentally, and the core attributes of Lee College must include kindness, compassion and flexibility.

“If you do not have kindness, compassion and flexibility, you cannot serve our students the way they need to be served,” Villanueva said. “And if you don’t have those core attributes, you are probably not going to fit in well with the new Lee College culture.”

The pandemic did not just impact how Lee College teaches students but also what they teach. Lee College plans to expand its offerings in logistics, supply chain management and cyber security training, three emerging career fields identified as potential growth areas in the post-COVID environment.

“Our community has suffered as a result of the pandemic, so we have to be on the cutting edge and on the front lines of aiding in the post-COVID recovery effort,” said Villanueva. “And we have to ensure that we are providing offerings that will allow our community to re-skill and up-skill so that they can develop the skills they need to have gainful employment. Since most graduates stay in the area, that investment will be returned back to our local community and economy.”

Although it has been a demanding and sometimes stressful first year on the job, Dr. Villanueva says she has never once regretted her decision to come to Lee College.

“I have never seen a community love a college the way it loves Lee College,” she said. “And I have never been surrounded by employees who serve the way our employees serve.”

“Since I became provost seven years ago, I knew I wanted to become a president. But I was patient, and I waited for the right opportunity for a college that I thought was a good fit where I can offer all of my talents. I believe Lee College is that special place I was waiting for.”
ExxonMobil Baytown works hand-in-hand with Hearts and Hands of Baytown

ExxonMobil recently provided Hearts and Hands of Baytown with $5,000 for continued food relief in the Baytown community. While the current pandemic has greatly impacted families, the recent winter storm also caused an additional hardship throughout the region.

Hearts and Hands of Baytown, a United Way organization, provides nutritious food for families in our community. It comes as no surprise that ExxonMobil would become an avid volunteer at local food drive events and offer their support where needed. Employee volunteer roles range from sorting and pre-packing boxes of fresh produce, non-perishable, bakery and household items, traffic control, and client registration. Hearts and Hands’ operations rely heavily on volunteer efforts and ExxonMobil is proud to be a part of their success.

“Hearts and Hands has done a fantastic job of making sure families in our community have access to fresh food, and they have been a great partner for us,” said Public and Government Affairs Advisor Connie Tilton. “We hope that this $5,000 donation will enable the organization to continue to reach more residents who need help after the winter storm.”

Hearts and Hands Executive Director Nikki Rincon was overwhelmed with the recent donation presented at a food distribution at Faith Family Church. “We appreciate all that ExxonMobil has done for our community and, through this generous donation, Hearts and Hands will be able to serve in a greater capacity. Through partners like ExxonMobil, Hearts and Hands has been able to fulfill our mission of serving our neighbors in need.”

RINCON CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Health initiatives and her good works continued to grow as she received motivation from so many, including Rachel Sabo, who provided Rincon with words of wisdom.

“Rachel went home to be with the Lord not long after,” Rincon said. “I cannot wait to tell her how cutting potatoes led to feeding hundreds of thousands in our community.”

In 2013 she decided to make the leap into food ministry full time.

“I continually saw Iglesia Cristo Viene and while there is a family connection with this amazing church,” Rincon said. “After writing a letter to the church board with my desire to start a feeding ministry I quickly learned they had a building and knew I was the person to get this started.”

On Feb. 14 of 2014, Rincon began hosting 12 weeks of outdoor markets to share their food resources with those in need and in May, the doors opened on Hearts and Hands of Baytown.

“In the early days, I would see the shelves depleted so quickly and worry about filling them, oh, the sleepless nights,” Rincon said.

From 2014 through 2017 they continued to serve in our Client Choice Market and outside distributions even developing partnerships with St Mark’s Methodist and Maranatha Church who each hosted six times a year along with partnering with other social service and health agencies to give clients as many resources as possible. “In three short years we had grown so fast it was astounding and we were invited to sit at the table of what is now known as Be Well™ Baytown - an initiative of The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, sponsored by ExxonMobil,” Rincon said. “One of the main tasks for Hearts and Hands was the distribution of fresh fruits and vegetables into the community through a variety of programs.”

The service and the need for it continued to grow over the next few years, but nothing like in the age of a pandemic. “We were truly walking into the unknown but in true Hearts and Hands fashion we were not backing down,” Rincon said. “With an army of volunteers, partner ministries and the support of all those who we had locked arms with years prior we blazed a trail.

“Looking back on 2020 we have lived through unprecedented times, each of us with a personal story of loss, tragedy and heartache.”

Partnerships have continued to increase enabling the organization to multiply efforts serving in different pockets of the community reaching those in need.

There have been 80 distributions at 15 different locations and two counties brought together hundreds of volunteers from every facet of the community.

“Being boots on the ground was the most physically and mentally challenging year we have faced,” Rincon said.

In 2020, the total served 36,433 families equaling 150,871 individuals 2,730,734 pounds or 2,275,611 meals.

“We saw record giving, added grant opportunities, completed an amazing expansion project that has more than doubled our storage capacity while also forging new collaborations uniting our community in service,” Rincon said. “So much more than food, together our success is evident in the smile of a single mother providing nutritious meals for her child, a senior who does not have to choose between food and medicine, a college student who receives nutritional support while pursuing higher education, a retired volunteer finding added value in life, the home- less man who is served compassion, and the retail donor who sees power in their donation.

“I stand in awe of all the Lord has done through the hearts of our community.”
Dave Beltram cast a wide net over Baytown in a number of roles geared toward helping others.

Arriving in 1970, Beltram was a teacher and dedicated volunteer in his church and numerous charities throughout his life, which ended Aug. 20 at the age of 82. His good deeds were enough to earn recognition as Baytown Sun Citizen of the Year finalist for 2021.

“If there was a word that could describe Mr. Beltram, it is selfless,” Eloy Valdez said. “He never thought about himself first, he thought about everyone else. He never said no to anything he was asked to do. He went above the call of duty to please people and get the job done.”

Valdez attributes Beltram’s habit of serving others to his upbringing in Pennsylvania. His family was a fixture in church and he never failed to have some change to give in the offering plate growing up. It made an impression on Beltram who began to initiate ways to help others when he reached the high school level.

At Thanksgiving, he would plan and lead food drives. At Christmas, it was toy drives and throughout the winter, there were coats to be gathered for those in need. Meanwhile he was a model student. His love of education helped steer Beltram toward a profession, as he became a teacher. He entered the U.S. Naval Reserve at the age of 15 and went on to Edinboro State College for his bachelor’s degree and qualifying for graduate school at the University of Montana.

Medical issues kept Beltram out of the Navy, but it would prove to benefit generations of students. After a stint in Pennsylvania, Beltram moved his family to Baytown and began teaching at Cedar Bayou Junior School. He would eventually move to Sterling where he became a fixture as Science Department Chairman. Among his achievements was starting the Math and Science Club and restarting the Science Fair.

“I met him in church,” Valdez said. “A long time ago he taught physics and chemistry in high school. He taught my son and two daughters in 1989 to 1991. When I joined St. Mark’s Methodist Church in 2004, he was already there. I knew whom he was when I worked with ExxonMobil. When he reinstituted the Science Fair, we provided the prizes.”

When it came time to retire, Beltram took up teaching at Lee College part-time. He filled as much of his remaining time as he could with volunteering.

“He was brought up that way,” Valdez said. “His parents were that kind of people. He was special and he would ask, ‘What else can I do?’ He was on all the St. Mark’s church committees.”

Beltram’s efforts earned him the nickname ‘SuperDave.’ Given the recognition he received throughout his time in Baytown, the nickname was well deserved. Among the awards were American Red Cross Reliability Award, Exxon Math & Science ‘Excellence in Teaching Award,’ HT Optimist Club’s Meritorious and Devoted Service Award along with Service with Honor and the Hearts and Hands’ Volunteer of the Year Award.

Dave Beltram receives the Volunteer of the Year Award from Hearts and Hands of Baytown. Beltram is pictured with Terri Vander Pol who together with her husband Dale Vander Pol and Dave led the food ministry for St Mark’s Methodist Church under the umbrella of Hearts and Hands of Baytown.
Harvey Oyler lived by his name as he fashioned a career at an oilfield chemical company and before that in similar ventures.

Once he retired in 2016, Oyler began to focus on giving back to the people.

So since moving on to his own life without the outside influence of the day-to-day work grind, Oyler picked up and started helping out with local philanthropic organizations like Kiwanis and the Lions Club. He hasn’t looked back one time without smiling about the decision he made.

“I always planned on giving back to the community when I retired,” Oyler said. “I worked in Houston and I never had time to get involved here. My wife was involved in many organizations and she encouraged me to join service clubs when I retired. It was something I wanted to do, but I couldn’t do. I worked all over the world and was out of town a lot. I didn’t have the time to put in community service.

“When I see a smile on their face for something we’ve done for them? That’s payback. About 65 percent of the students in Goose Creek are under the poverty level, so anything extra you can do for them, they really appreciate it.”

Among the many activities he is involved in includes raising flags for the Lions Club and with Kiwanis he has coordinated the purchases of bicycles for children at Alamo Elementary. He is also the committee chairman for Partners in Education for the Kiwanis.

He also can offer a darn good judge of gumbo. Not bad for a late bloomer in giving time to good works.

“Both clubs spotlight children and I truly enjoy working with children,” he said. “My daughter is a teacher at Alamo, so it was a good fit for me to do a lot of volunteering there. I just love the camaraderie of the members of the clubs. It helps to break up the week with a meeting on Tuesdays and Thursdays and the other activities.

“The pandemic has slowed down my involvement with the schools lately.”

Lions Club installs flags on the national holidays across town as a fundraiser - $40 per flag per year.

“I personally put up about 80 a year,” Oyler said. “We go out six or seven times a year. I know it benefits the club and gives me physical activity. I don’t like to sit around all day watching TV. I have to be doing something.”

Kiwanis helps give out a dozen bicycles to kids fortunate enough to have their names drawn. Oyler will sometimes be able to contribute a couple of them with money out of his own pocket.

Then there is the gumbo cookoff he gladly indulges in as a judge.

“This year, since we can’t have person-to-person sit down meals, we are cooking the gumbo at the Optimists Club and then selling tickets so it’s a drive by and pick up the gumbo situation,” Oyler said. “The gumbo we are serving this year is the champion recipe from last year – Beth Thompson and her husband, Chuck. “It was pretty good. It was chicken and sausage and had a great flavor. There were like six or seven teams there.”

Oyler moved to Baytown in 1968 from Sabine after transferring to Baroide’s facility in Channelview and the last 15 years of his career he worked with Prince Energy.

He has been married to his wife Ann for 58 years and they has three children (Julie, Tommy and Kenneth), six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

“When I retired, I knew that this was what I was going to do,” Oyler said. “I met people in both of those clubs. I was going to join Rotary, but they had mandatory attendance and after 55 years of work, I didn’t want to work with deadlines and mandatory times.

“I am getting a lot out of it. It’s better than I expected,” he said.
Ask David Weber why he spends so much time, and his own money, into keeping the Senior Center in Baytown going, he will say it is in the genes. Weber said his grandmother worked for 47 years after retirement at a senior center in Milwaukee.

“It didn’t matter what kind of weather, or if it snowed on the ground, she got on a bus, and she went to the center,” Weber said. “It is just in my blood.”

Weber is one of the nominees up for the 2021 Citizen of the Year honor. He has led the senior center as its president since 2009. The Highlands resident retired from an auto parts store in 2008, came to the center, was elected as its president, and has been there ever since.

The Senior Center opened in February 1988 with Blanche Weller as the center’s coordinator.

“It has always had a board of directors and a president,” Weber said. “Everyone was a volunteer. It was not a paid position. It is a self-supportive organization. We try to get donations from places like Walmart, Kroger, and some of the healthcare places around.”

Weber said when he first came to the center, not a lot was happening for the seniors.

“They were doing bingo one day a week and had a morning dance, one day a week,” he said. “Only about two people were running it, and it had about 18 members. They have a charter with the city, and it wasn’t being operated the way it was supposed to be.”

That is when Weber said Parks and Recreation Director Scott Johnson approached him and said they needed to get the organization back to where it was supposed to be.

After holding an election of officers and voting in a board of directors, Weber began to make some changes.

“We started monthly dances,” he said. “We started a Friday dance, a monthly dance, and it was a fundraiser at the same time for us. We then started doing bingo twice a week and an exercise class and still had Thursday morning dances.”

Weber said they also started offering more senior day trips using Harris County buses.

“We would go to Brenham, or see the bluebonnets, or go to different community centers that were having special functions. We would also go to ball games, ice shows, and the circus. Where ever they would let us put a trip together, we’d try to do it,” Weber said.

Weber said he had taken the seniors to the swamp, boat rides, and even took them out to Galveston Bay for some shark fishing.

“I feel the way a senior can stay healthy is by exercising,” Weber said. “That means getting them out and visiting with other seniors. A lot of them love dancing.”

COVID-19 resulted in many of the senior trips having to be canceled. Weber stepped up to make sure the seniors were not facing the pandemic alone.

“The first thing is we got to keep in touch with these seniors,” he said. “Instead of just calling them, we started doing a weekly meal delivery. Every Wednesday, we would cook a meal and deliver them. Up until October, we did 1,550 meals. We boxed them up and took them to their doors. Why? Because if I physically get to see you, I know you are Ok. That was the goal - to make sure they were up and moving and needed anything. A lot of them didn’t want to get out. So we’d go grocery shopping for them and do whatever they needed.”

Georgie Crow is one of the senior members at the center. She nominated Weber as a Citizen of the Year.

“I went over to fix her pipes and ended up fixing her daughter’s before hers,” Weber said.

Ginny Knowles, another senior member, said Weber takes care of them all.

“Mr. Weber is hard to explain,” Knowles said. “He runs the Seniors of Baytown, and when we had the lockdown, he fed his seniors every week out of his own money, and if we needed anything, he would shop for it. He keeps us going and gets no pay for all he does. He calls all of us (during the winter freeze), and some even have broken pipes. He is taking care of us and is out early and late to fix the pipes for many of us.”

Knowles felt Weber is a worthy person for Citizen of the Year.

“If anyone deserves it, it is him,” she said. “There is so much this man gives and is still there for his wife who has liver cancer.”

Weber said about 150 seniors show up for the first Sunday of the month, mostly for dancing. The usual attendance is about 65, he said.

“Some are still leery about coming (due to COVID),” Weber said.

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**CITIZEN OF THE YEAR FINALIST**

David Weber

Longtime Senior Center leader keeps Baytown area seniors active

By Matt Hollis

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David Weber, left, announces the winner of a bingo game at the Baytown Senior Center, one of his many functions as president. Also pictured is Ginny Knowles.

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SEE WEBER • PAGE 10
BY MICHAEL PINEDA

Jim Wadzinski recalls the first time he met Kim Elswick. Kim, who along with her husband Roger, owns Community Toyota, Honda and Kia, was described as a lovely woman.

“She was kind, very personable and smart,” he said. Employees of the Elswicks have gotten to know her in the same way and this past fall, many in Baytown had the opportunity to feel their kindness first hand.

“We have extremely blessed to be a part of the community building strong friendships and receiving tremendous support,” Kim Elswick said.

In response to the pandemic, the Elswicks made a number of donations, giving $77,500 to local charities and another $150,000 to food donations. Stepping up when so many people were down has led to Kim Elswick earning recognition as a Baytown Sun Citizen of the Year finalist.

“Due to COVID, it seemed like so many people were affected by this in a devastating way that I wanted to attempt to assist those individuals and charities that would be the most impacted or who would be helping others who were most affected by COVID,” Kim said. “It brought so much joy and it was truly a blessing being able to share that experience with others.”

Kim spoke with Roger about giving back and Wadzinski was tasked with identifying non-charities who would receive financial support. The first list did not pass muster as Kim tore it up.

“Kim felt obliged to give back more to individuals,” Wadzinski said.

“She prefers to be in the background, but her influence is always there.”

In a typical year, there are a number of charities that receive a helping hand from the Elswicks.

“Just to name a few, our church as well as local churches in the area, Bay Area Homeless Shelter, Goose Creek CISD Education Foundation, Food for the Poor, Lee College, Pregnancy Resource Center, Rotary, Texas Values, and Trinity Valley Exposition,” Kim said.

That list grew this year as some charities were added.

The donations, handed out to groups such as the Lee College Foundation, Pregnancy Resource Center, Project Blue, Bridge over Troubled Waters and Missouri Street Church of Christ Pantry, were designed to help organizations impacted by the pandemic.

Those along with food distributions in October, November and December were above and beyond the typical philanthropist efforts.

“The Elswicks are the best people I have worked for in my 45 years of business experience,” Wadzinski said. “They care about their employees and they are considerate. They expect performance but they reward performance.

“They have a great foundation of faith.”

In terms of faith, Kim said they seek to be in God’s presence daily in an effort to fulfill his will for their lives and pray more will come to know him.

The Elswicks entered the Baytown business community with the purchase of the Toyota dealership in 2005, KIA in 2007 and Honda in 2010.

They also bought a dealership in Lafayette in 2019 and plan on opening a new Honda facility in Baytown in July.

“During the crisis, Community has not had one employee laid off, and any employees affected by COVID have been paid off through the quarantine period,” Wadzinski said. “In one instance, an employee was seriously affected with over 6 months in hospital and rehab and never missed a paycheck.”

The pandemic was felt by the Elswick family first-hand as they were thankful for not suffering to the degree others did.

“Our family did have COVID but thankfully symptoms were minor and we recovered quickly. We did have some employees that had much more serious cases and are now recovering,” Kim said. “I continue to pray for the safety of everyone.”

From left are Sarah Bonilla, Kim Elswick and Makena Elswick. The trio was photographed at the first of three food distributions sponsored by Community Toyota-Honda-Kia at Faith Family Church in the last quarter of 2020. The event fed 1,250 families, and total Community sponsorship donation was over $125,000.
Food ministry is her passion

BY ALAN DALE
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Nikki Rincon has been in the caring business for a long time now. It’s just that a year of the COVID-19 pandemic made her caring go a longer way than anticipated.

However, despite being the executive director of Hearts and Hands of Baytown, to her this role is more than a job: “It is my calling, my passion, without a doubt, what the Lord created me to do,” Rincon said. “It is His strength, His grace, His mercy, His love, being poured out through me and each member of the Hearts and Hands family to a hurting community.”

It all started as a young girl, Nikki Jared was born and bred in Baytown and a graduate of Robert E. Lee where she met James Rincon and the two high school sweethearts were inseparable from the age of 14. After going to San Jacinto College and attending to the birth of her two sons Jared and Jacob, Nikki Rincon’s focus moved to serve in food ministry.

Over those early years she served as room and team mom and PTO officer often facilitating food baskets for those in need or arranging field trips for staff to tour under resourced areas in the community. She also discovered an ability in event planning, design and catering. Who knew it would lead to the creation of Hearts and Hands of Baytown? Well, it took a lot of time and battling through adversity to get there.

“I was busy planning events, teaching upward of 15 classes a week and caring for my incredible family when I began suffering with unusual health issues,” she said. “What began with voice loss, led to issues swallowing and ultimately two surgeries, hospitalizations and the feeling of my life being stripped away. Who was I if I did not have my full voice, if I could not instruct, if I could not eat normally, if I could not be the mom and wife I so desperately needed to be?”

The expected questions of “why” came calling and an angry woman reached out to God and her plan came into place. She taught group fitness at Tiger Gym at ExxonMobil and got involved with Culture of SEE RINCON • PAGE 10
The Baytown Sun Citizens of the Year

1995 – Fritz Lanham  
1996 – Lisa Urban  
1997 – Eddie Gray  
1998 – Bob Gillette  
1999 – John B. Tucker  
2000 – Carole Opryshek  
2001 – Ida Griffith  
2002 – Gene Poirot  
2003 – Adrienne Bernard  
2004 – Pete Alfaro  
2005 – Carolyn & Robert Francis  
2006 – Tommie Jones  
2007 – Mike Wilson  
2008 – Gilbert Santana  

2009 – Joyce Pennington  
2010 – Carl Brandon  
2011 – Pam Warford  
2011 – Larry Cryer  
2012 – Roger Elswick  
2013 – Gary Englert  
2014 – Jim Wadzinski  
2015 – Mel Stone  
2016 – Nancy Mann  
2017 – Ken Pridgeon  
2018 – Lee & Leila Bates  
2019 – Jay Eshbach  
2020 – Judy Wheat  
2021 – Daryl Fontenot

The process: Past winners select new Citizen of Year

So how does The Sun come up with its Citizen of the Year? Each year, The Baytown Sun solicits nominations from readers to recognize community members who go the extra mile. Previous Citizens of the Year, who comprise The Sun’s selection committee, then select the Citizen of the Year and Citizen of the Year finalist from the nominations.

The Baytown Sun is accepting nominations for 20 under 40, the young professionals under age 40, whom you know that deserve a little recognition for their hard work, volunteerism and community service. We understand the impact this diligent group has on the future of our community. They are our leaders of tomorrow.

Please email your nominations to: carol.skewes@baytownsun.com

Deadline for Nominations: April 20th, 2021

Former Baytown Mayor Pete Alfaro and shelter board chairman congratulates Daryl Fontenot for earning an award recognizing him for contributions to the success of Bay Area Homeless Services and its programs. Fontenot has been on the organization’s finance committee for years.

The couple has three sons: Andy, 28; Nicholas, 25, will graduate from UHCL in May; and Adam, 19, studies chemical engineering at LSU.

Asked why he devotes so much time to the community in addition to the time it takes to have a job and family, Fontenot said, “There’s a quote by Mohammed Ali that means a lot to me, and that’s ‘Service is the rent we pay for our room here on earth.’”

He said his father was very involved in the community and the church. “Once he retired from farming he volunteered at what was then known as the battered women’s shelter.” He served as a volunteer driver and later as a board member.

Fontenot grew up on a farm in the Coady area at Thompson Road and Cedar Bayou-Lynchburg.

“We could sit at the end of the driveway and watch movies at the Decker Drive-in,” he said. “I can remember watching ‘The Godfather’ from my driveway.” If there were enough cars there they could hear the movie as well. “I love Baytown. I’m proud to be a Baytonian,” Fontenot said.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

the Lee College Foundation board, helping to raise money for scholarships. Previously he was a founding member of the Goose Creek Education Foundation, but no longer serves on that board.

Education is far from his only interest, though.

Fontenot is secretary for the Baytown Rotary Club, where he has also served as president and treasurer. “I believe I’m the only Rotarian to have held every office,” he said.

He is past president of the local United Way and a member of its Community Impact Committee.

Fontenot also serves on the finance committee of Bay Area Homeless Services.

Fontenot is a lifelong member of Holy Family Catholic Church where he serves as a lector and on the finance committee.

Fontenot is married to Bridgette Fontenot who works for Chevron Phillips as a training coordinator.
Most Citizen of the Year stories start with oil — how Baytown’s signature industry brought its community leaders, or their parents, from other parts of the country or world.

It was agriculture, not oil, that brought Daryl Fontenot’s parents here, farming rice on land that is now brimming with homes and industry. “Baytown wasn’t just refineries. There was quite a big farming industry,” he recalled.

While his father was a farmer with little formal education, he instilled a love of learning and service.

“My father only went to the eighth grade. He grew up in rural Louisiana and basically after that you were considered old enough to help on the farm, but he loved education.

“He was fantastic at math. I can remember in high school him actually helping me with my trigonometry homework and it’s like, ‘How do you know this?’”

Fontenot followed his father’s footsteps in his love for education, his capacity to work with numbers and a desire to serve his community.

Now a financial planner with Merrill Lynch, Fontenot was able to get the education his father didn’t, graduating from Sterling High School then attaining a bachelor’s degree from the University of Texas and an MBA from University of Houston Clear Lake. Since 2019 he has served on the Board of Regents of Lee College, an institution that prides itself on opening educational doors. He is also on...
AN EMERGENCY IS ALWAYS AN EMERGENCY — WE CAN SEE YOU SAFELY

At Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital, we continue to expand our services to meet the needs of our growing community. Our state-of-the-art emergency department provides the full spectrum of emergency care 24/7/365 to all patients. We offer:

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