

In our 96th Year of Service to
Youth & the Community

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Optimist Club of Birmingham

The Flagship Club of the
Alabama-Mississippi District
January-February 2024

Meets 3rd Thursday
12:00 Noon

Club Oratorical Contest to be Held March 2nd, 10 am

Oratorical Contest Chair, **Erma Hinton**, will conduct the contest at **Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 980 Huffman Rd., Birmingham, AL 35215**, in St. Bernadette Hall (formerly named the "Youth Building", where we usually meet..) A "continental breakfast" will be provided at no cost.

Contestants, as well as those serving as judges and those providing food and beverages, are asked to arrive by no later than 9:30 a.m. All others are asked to arrive by no later than 9:45 a.m., so that the program can begin promptly at 10 a.m. and there will be no interruptions during the speeches.

JANUARY & FEBRUARY CLUB MEETINGS January 18, 2024 Meeting

Our guest speaker was **Lisa M. Jones**, Jefferson County Extension Coordinator and Director of Alabama Cooperative Extension System. She joined Alabama Cooperative Extension in 2015 following an extensive career in communications, marketing, business development and organizational advancement in the private and nonprofit sectors. She is responsible for needs assessment and program recruitment for Alabama's most populous county. She works with urban agriculture and food systems in this capacity.. She holds a BA in communications from the University of Alabama and a Masters in Adult Education from Auburn University.

FEBRUARY 15TH ESSAY CONTEST

Essay Contest Chair, **Sharon Wilson**, introduced each of the 9 Essay Contest participants at the meeting, held at Alabama Power Company. The two schools represented in the contest were Jefferson Christian Academy (JCA) & Jefferson County International Baccalaureate (JCIB).

The top 3 essays were read by:

1st Place winner - Nadia McDade (JCA)

2nd Place winner - Jamaya Hoskins (JCIB)

3rd Place winner - Shannon Washington (JCA)

Other participants included: **Kamari Autery, Alayah Cockrell-Turner, Ahlam Masood, Jaelyn Neal, & Isaac J. Rutledge**, all students at JCA, and **Sammie Poarch**, a student at JCIB.

Nadia's winning essay has been submitted for further competition in the Alabama-Mississippi District Contest for the opportunity to earn a \$2,500 college scholarship to be used at the college of her choice.

Each participant received a Certificate of Participation. The top 3 winners also each received a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place medallion, along with a cash prize of \$300 (1st), \$200 (2nd), and \$100 (3rd).

Congratulations to each of our top 3 winners, as well as to each of our participants on a job well done!

Our speaker at the **February 15th Meeting** was one of our newest Club Members, **Desiree Hutcherson-Bates**, a SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Education) REA (Regional Extension Agent) for Jefferson County. Desiree has served as the Alabama Extension SNAP-Ed REA Agent in Jefferson County for the past ten years. She has been a champion in her community for physical activity for all age populations. Also, she's been a critical part of implementing policy changes in schools throughout Jefferson County. As a SNAP-Ed REA, Desiree plans to promote healthy habits to improve lives and advocate for communities with limited resources. Through diverse partnerships and collaborations, she plans to implement policies, systems, and environmental strategies to promote healthy habits for Alabamians in Jefferson County. Desiree says, "My passion is to help improve community health on all levels while promoting fun and creating great memories."

The Club was honored to have so many guests, along with members, at our February meeting Essay Contest. In addition to each of the Contestants already named, the following guests and members were in attendance: **Kendrick Burnice, Jerome Bell, DeShanna Austin, Tina Thornton, Casie Poarch, Desiree Bates, Angene Coleman, Jacquelyn Holder, Danella Johnson, Adrienne Pearson, Mark Taylor, Ron Taylor, Dr. Paul Amamoo, Gwen Amamoo, Nancy Ryan, Jon Ryan, Erma Hinton, Clara Greene, Maria Hatch, Roger Vaughan, Leon Evans, Marteissa Mauldin, Renee Green-Jones, Andrea Neal, Gantry Powell, Alanna McDade, Kera McDade, Sharon Wilson & Carolyn McCoy.**

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, March 2nd – Oratorical Contest, 10 am

Thursday, March 14th – Board Mtg. on Zoom, 1 pm

Thursday, March 21st – NO CLUB MTG.

MEMBER NEWS

Our Club Officers and Members send our prayers and extend our deepest condolences to **Teresa Jones** on the loss of her cousin, **Darryl Freeman, Sr.**

January Birthdays: 4th – Teresa Jones, 8th – Leon Evans, 22nd – Kenny Haynes, 29th – Ron Taylor

Anniversaries: 24th – Andre & Valencia Flowers, 28th – Sri & Dr. Sudha Gutti

February Birthdays: 3rd – Dr. Sudha Gutti, 18th – Bert Perry, 25th – Carolyn McCoy

Anniversaries: 14th – Michael & Teresa Jones, 19th – Jerry & Angene Coleman

Hope you each enjoy(ed) 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!

OPTIMIST ACTIVITIES

FEBRUARY 15, 2024, CLUB MEETING & ESSAY SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST



President Carolyn McCoy & Essay Contest Chair Sharon Wilson congratulate 2nd Place Winner, Jamaya Hoskins; 3rd Place Winner, Shannon Washington; and 1st Place Winner, Nadia McDade, at the annual Essay Contest Scholarship Program.



Participants of the annual Club Essay Scholarship Contest with their Certificates of Participation & Optimist bag filled with goodies presented by the Club.



Essay Contest Chair Sharon Wilson presents each of the winners with a medallion & cash award.



President Carolyn McCoy thanks speaker Desiree Bates for her excellent presentation.



1st Place Winner Nadia McDade



2nd Place Winner Jamaya Hoskins



3rd Place Winner Shannon Washington



Angene Coleman with guests from Helping Families Initiative: Director Tina Thornton, DeShanna Austin, Kendrick Burnice & Jerome Bell.

OPTIMIST ACTIVITIES

AFRICAN AMERICAN READ-IN ROBINSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FEBRUARY 8TH

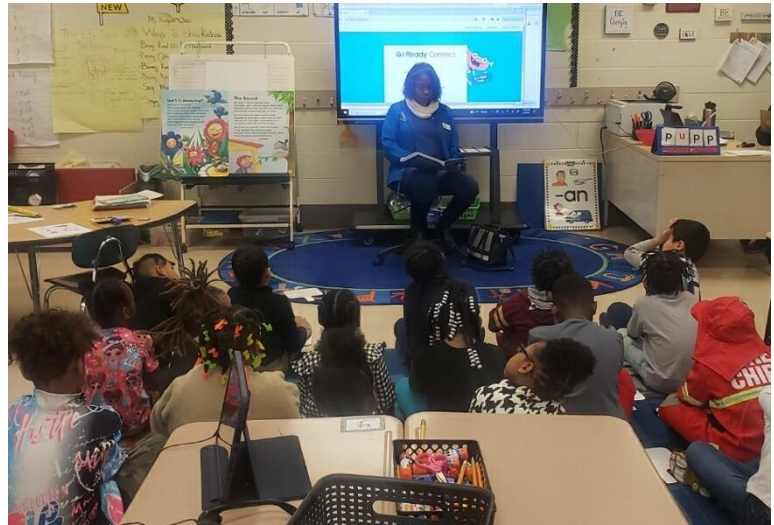
Optimist Club of Birmingham members, along with volunteers from Jefferson County District Attorney's Helping Families Initiative (HFI), volunteered at Robinson Elementary School on Thursday, February 8th, to read books to students for our "African American Read-In" in honor of Black History Month. The Club also donated several books written by black authors to the school. The event is co-chaired by Board Member Angene Coleman and Vice President Anita Lee.



Club Members Angene Coleman, Carolyn McCoy, Erma Hinton, Sharon Wilson, Ra'Jeeni Marshall, & Anita Lee, along with volunteer Kendrick Burnice, enjoyed reading to students at Robinson Elementary School and were honored to present books written by black authors to the school!



Volunteer Kendrick Burnice with Club Members Sharon Wilson, Danella Johnson, Carolyn McCoy, Erma Hinton, Anita Lee & Ra'Jeeni Marshall.



President Carolyn McCoy reading to students at Robinson Elementary



Vice President Anita Lee enjoyed sharing a book with students at Robinson Elementary.



HFI Volunteer Sharon Forte reads to students at Robinson Elementary.

OPTIMIST ACTIVITIES



Ra'Jeeni Marshall reads to students at Robinson Elementary



Vice President Sharon Wilson reading to students at Robinson Elementary



Danella Johnson reading to students at Robinson Elementary



Angene Coleman & Anita Lee thank volunteers Kendrick Burnice & Sharon Forte for giving of their time to read to students.



Erma Hinton enjoyed reading to students at Robinson Elementary.



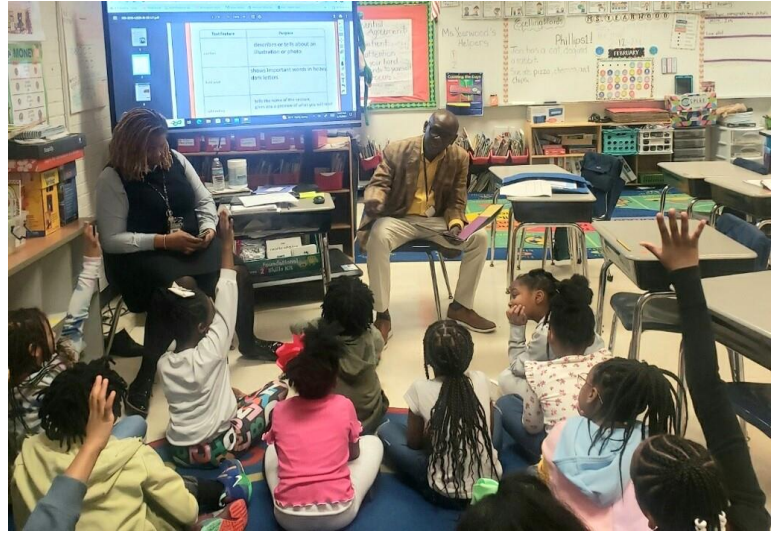
Erma Hinton displays one of the books read and donated to the school.

OPTIMIST ACTIVITIES

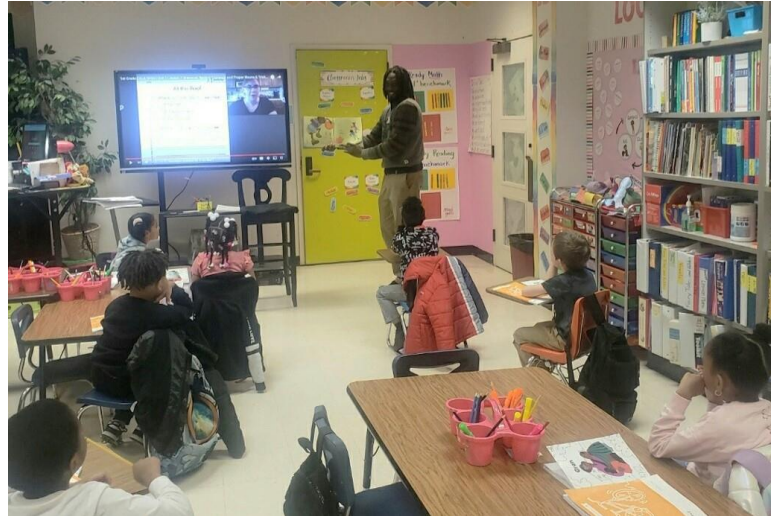
AFRICAN AMERICAN READ-IN PHILLIPS ACADEMY FEBRUARY 13TH



Optimist Club of Birmingham Board Member Angene Coleman & Vice President Anita Lee, along with volunteers Kendrick Burnice & Jerome Bell, with Jefferson County District Attorney's *Helping Families Initiative*, read to students at Phillips Academy on February 13th, as part of our Club's "African American Read-In" program in recognition of Black History Month. The Club also donated several books written by black authors to the school. The event is co-chaired by Board Member Angene Coleman and Vice President Anita Lee.



Volunteer Jerome Bell enjoyed reading to enthusiastic students at Phillips Academy.



Volunteer Kendrick Burnice enjoyed sharing a book with students at Phillips Academy!