assistance league® Triangle Area

Community Link

2024-2025 Vol. 19 Issue 1

Operation School Bell®: New Digs for Our Duds!

by Martha Funsten

Operation School Bell® provided new clothing to 2,104 children last year, and as in years past, was totally operated out of storage units for most of the year, and donated space for a few short weeks in the fall. In May, we found the perfect space to host all of our philanthropic programs, and Operation School Bell was able to leave the storage units behind for the new space on Glen Royal Road. It is wonderful to be able to spread out our clothing and we look forward to being able to bring in additional people and groups to help us meet the needs of the children in need.

Operation School Bell continues to grow both in number of children served and our visibility in the community. We have been such a steady presence for the schools – having served many of them for well over 10 years and some of the schools for over 25 years, and we are now a reliable resource for schools across the Triangle.

We work directly with 29 schools, but as a resource to the social workers helping students without stable housing, we provided clothing for children in 148 schools – in almost half of all Wake County Schools, in over half of all Durham County Schools, and all but one school in Orange County. This total includes 89 elementary schools, but also 33 middle schools and 26 high schools, especially significant since those levels can struggle to get help.

Community Volunteers helping to upfit the new Raleigh Philanthropic Center

Operation School Bell Achievements:

- Delivered bags of clothes and shoes to 1,440 children
- Hosted 644 children at in-store shopping events, where they were able to select $75 - $130 worth of clothing and shoes
- Served a record 716 children involved through the McKinney Vento program, which assists children experiencing homelessness

*Volunteers dedicated over **23,860** hours of their very valuable time this year.*

To help upfit the new Raleigh Philanthropic Center, a group of volunteers with ReDesign Training joined several of our members for two Build Days. In total, they provided our organization with 215 volunteer hours as well as fundraising efforts in the amount of $2,220, which was used to fund rolling bin shelving and worktables for Operation School Bell.

The efforts of this group provided our chapter with the resources needed to kickstart our new philanthropic space and provided the equipment needed to support Operation School Bell, Kid's Place, Women In Need and e-Commerce programs.

27 Years of Community Service

This year marks the **27th year** that Assistance League of the Triangle Area has been providing philanthropic programs and support to the community to impact the lives of so many, as indicated with a few highlights below:

★ Provided **451 scholarships** totaling over $1.75 million since 2000

★ Served **35,070 students** through Operation School Bell since the 1998-1999 school year

★ Returned over **$4.7 million** to the community through philanthropic programs since 1997

Visit www.altriangle.org for more information and how to support us

Kid's Place: Providing for Comfort Needs of Pediatric Patients

By Andi Seger

Created by our organization in 1997, **Kid's Place** began as a single room "oasis" for kids being treated at Raleigh's WakeMed Emergency Center. The primary purpose of the program is to provide comfort to children and their families during a very stressful time within emergency department facilities.

This program has continued to expand and to help support this expansion. In 2024, the Assistance League Philanthropic Center opened in Raleigh, with a dedicated room for the Kid's Place Program, which provides a one-stop location for the storage of inventory for the program's comfort items, including bears, toys and stickers. Packaging and delivering of all items now originate from this space allowing for greater efficiency for the Kid's Place Committee.

This program provided over 39,000 items including Assistance League teddy bears, children's books (in English & Spanish), crayons, coloring books, stickers, Play Doh, flavored chap ice and a treasure chest with small toys.

Kid's Place Locations:

- WakeMed Emergency Departments - Raleigh, Apex, Brier Creek, Cary, Garner, and Wendell
- Duke Children's Hospital – Durham & Duke Hospital - Raleigh
- UNC Pediatric Specialty Clinics - Chapel Hill and Raleigh
- UNC Rex Pediatric Unit – Raleigh, Holly Springs

Bringing a stocked Treasure Chest and AL Teddy Bears to an Emergency Center

New Kid's Place dedicated space

Stocking the Treasure Chest in partnership with Emergency Centers

Women in Need Program: Supporting Community Partners

The **Women in Need Program** is designed to help women and their families in distressing situations. By working in partnership with local agencies, we strive to transform the lives of women, children and families through community programs highlighted below.

Families Moving Forward

This program provides temporary housing, skills education, case management and connection to community resources to help parents and children thrive in stable homes. We supply bedding such as comforters, quilts, sheets and bed pillows, as well as household items, as needed.

Urban Ministeries

The Helen Wright Center is a low-barrier emergency shelter that offers safe shelter and provides for the basic needs of single women experiencing homelessness. On the fifth Wednesday of the month, we prepare and deliver dinner to this center. We pride ourselves on preparing homemade meals most preferred by the women based on their feedback.

InterAct Solace Center

Interact is the only provider of domestic violence and sexual assault services in Wake County. We provide Assault Survivor Kits of clothing and other essenail client needs to its Solace Center which nurses, services and advocates for survivors of rape and sexual assault. We also participate in the "Holiday in a Box Bazaar" by contributing fleece blankets for the event.

Women's Center Daily Shelter

This day shelter supports women facing homelessness. We supply their pantry monthly based on current needs, as well as backpacks, hygiene items, sleeping bags, underwear, socks, clothing, and luggage. On the third Thursday of each month, we prepare and serve lunch at the center from 11:30 - 12:15 p.m.

Women's Center Stable Housing

This program finds stable housing for homeless women, through their Intergrative Permanent Community Supportive Housing (ICPSH) program. We provide welcome baskets with household supplies, gift cards for the holidays, as well as essential items for women who have been in stable housing but still need assistance with day-to-day items.

Scholarships Program: Investing in the Next Generation

By Grace Fox & Phyllis Sullivan

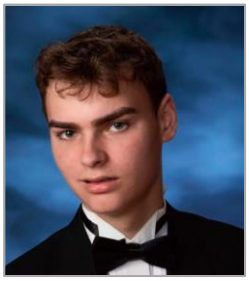
This was another exciting year for Assistance League of the Triangle Area Scholarship Program—with $169,000 awarded to 28 recipients in need of financial assistance. These scholarships support students who will attend North Carolina colleges, universities, or technical schools. This year's scholarships were made possible thanks to the Gipson Family Foundation, the Yarger family, the Open Your Heart campaign as well as proceeds from A-Z Thrift Shop.

Avery Riordan - Returning Scholar

Avery *has completed her freshman year at Appalachian State* ***University****. Prior to starting college, she completed an internship at Rex Hospital where her dedication and hard work earned her an outstanding volunteer award. This experience helped set Avery on her chosen path of becoming a nurse practitioner.*

Andree Gunderson – Returning Scholar

Andree *is a returning scholar enrolled at the* ***University of North Carolina – Pembroke****. Andree's whole world has expanded and he says, "With a college professor teaching a class comprised primarily of a generally more studious and involved group of students, I felt for the first time, as if I grasped the concept of things like literature, philosophy, and art; how they relate to and define the world around us, as well as their individual components that work to make the whole." Andree has the distinctions of receiving the Yarger Scholarship as they contribute annually to our Scholarship Program.*



Jamileth "Jami" Olvera - New Recipient

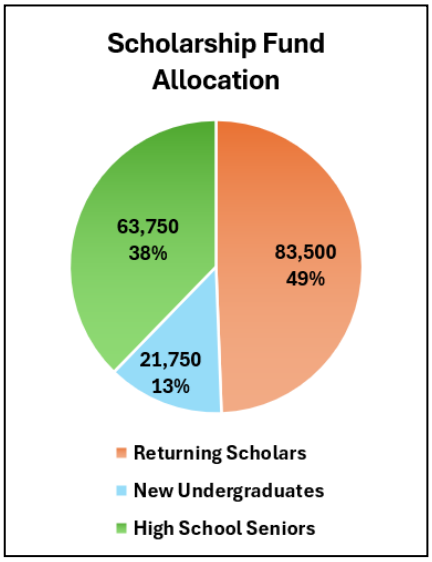
Jami *graduated from Apex High School with a GPA of 3.79. She was a part of the Mayor's Internship Program, helped K-5 prepare for the Science Olympiad and was an assistant coach for a middle school volleyball team. She also held several part-time jobs to help toward anticipated college expenses.*

Nicholas Mazzella – New Recipient

Nicholas *embodies the spirit of service and scholarship and attends* ***Southeastern Baptist Seminary*** *where he's pursuing a major in Cultural Studies. Driven by his passion for humanity and faith, Nicholas envisions a future where he can plant churches, serve as a missionary, and engage in various projects aimed at enhancing the well-being of others. His commitment to service is evident in extensive volunteer work—including serving at a local food pantry.*

Abdalla Kamel – Returning Scholar

Abdallah *has excelled in his studies of Health Policy and Language Arts. He has achieved a 4.0 at* ***Durham Technical Community College (DTCC)*** *and now has plans to transfer to the* ***University of North Carolina – Greensboro****. He is a leader who founded the Muslim Student Association and is Vice President of the DTCC Student Government Association. Per one of his professors, "I know that Abdalla's perspective, acumen, and insight will be especially valuable in the field of health policy. His work reflects not only his cultivated skills as a thinker and learner, but also continuing commitment to inclusivity and globality, which are crucial to contemporary health policy debates and initiatives."*



Returning Scholars

Luis Carmona - NCSU
Sierra Focazio - Appalachian State
Andree Gunderson - UNC Charlotte
Grace Hall - UNC Wilmington
Abdulla Kamal - UNC Greensboro
Sean Kearney - Appalachian State
Justine Pennycooke - NCSU
Katie Pitalua – Meredith College
Avery Riordan - Appalachian State
Aneltha Santizo-Escobar - UNC Greensboro
Ashley Smith - NCSU
Kelsey Smith – Meredith College
Larry Stroud - Western Carolina University
Ariana Viada – Duke University

New Undergraduates:

Anysah Meneau - Western Carolina
Jesica Silva-Flores – Durham Tech
Lelani Williamson - NCSU

New High School Seniors

Christian Barron-Anaya - NCSU
Katherine Castro-Villalon – Meredith College
Seema Gonzalez-Rodriguez - NCSU
Kyla Guilford - NC A&T
Nicholas Mazella – Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary
Analise Nguyen - UNC Chapel Hill
Jamileth Olivera - UNC Chapel Hill
Clara Pratt – Wake Tech Community College
Anthony Rossi – Lees-McRae College
Jocelyn Morgenstein. – Duke University

Apply for Scholarships by March 1, 2026

In-Store and Online Shopping Fund our Programs

Our thrift shop is the primary fundraiser for Assistance League of the Triangle Area. This boutique style shop is made possible by the generous donations from our community and our amazing volunteers. We also have an online shopping experience. Our volunteers are the heartbeat of both shopping experiences, and their dedication and hard work keep things running smoothly.

A-Z Thrift Shop
1621 N. Market Dr.
Raleigh, NC 27609
919-875-8901

Hours:
Wed. – Sat.
11 am – 4 pm

SHOP ★ DONATE ★ VOLUNTEER

Volunteers of the Year Awards

Anna Merrett (above) and Joyce Poole (below)

As voted by our membership, Joyce Poole and Anna Merrett were recognized for their contributions this year.

The Leadership Award, presented to Anna recognizes a volunteer at the leadership level in the organization who has provided the most outstanding service during the year. Anna has been a member since 2009 and has dedicated her time to various leadership positions to help determine strategy and guide operations.

The Founder's Award, presented to Joyce, is given to a volunteer who has rendered the greatest service to the organization during the year and shared in the spirit and enthusiasm for Triangle Area initiatives. Since joining in 2009, she has dedicated her time to fundraising through the Thrift Shop, as well as providing clothing to children through Operation School Bell.

Assistance League Action Week

To battle weekend food insecurity for elementary school children, **Assistance League (AL) Action Week** raised funds and collected snacks for Power Pack Program in partnership with Alpha Kappa Sorority – PSI Gamma Omega Chapter.

Donations totaling $1,835 included 2,723 single-serve breakfast, lunch and dinner items to children at Orange County schools.

Our Members: The Heartbeat of Our Organization

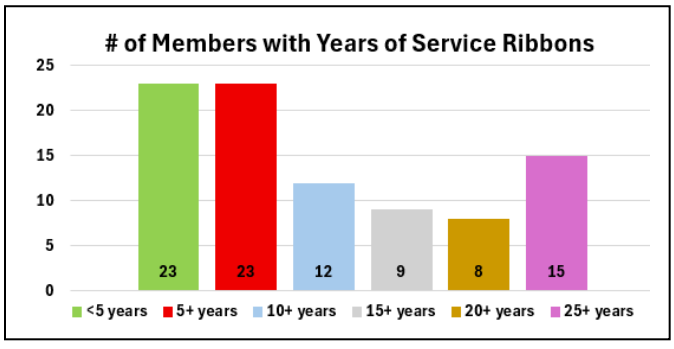
By Anna Merrett, President

Volunteer Members are the heart and soul of our organization. Their commitment, time, and passion for helping others has resulted in another meaningful year. As we work hard to fulfill our philanthropic commitments, we must also recognize the whole-hearted contributions of our dedicated members because with them, we truly achieve our mission to transform lives in our local community.

Thank You: Board of Directors

Front row (L-R): Nona Wright, Patti Lazoff, Ann Cole, Phyllis Sullivan

Back Row (L-R): Dottie Fuller, Leslie Hodge, Patti Cunningham, Deb Woolfolk, Lupe Boyle, Barbara Townson, Anna Merrett



Value of Volunteer Hour in North Carolina: $33.01
Source: www.independentsector.org

Funds & Grants Highlights

By Shelley Stirling

A heartfelt thank you to all of our generous donors who supported Assistance League of the Triangle Area from June 1, 2023, through May 31, 2025. The following list recognizes both financial and in-kind donations and may include designated and/or matching funds. We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this list, so please accept our sincere apologies if your name is not included or it is misspelled. If you would like your name removed from our recognition list or have any other corrections, please email President@altriangle.org.

Thank You to the Following for Their Generous Support!

Grantors

Access Family Dental (Dr. Robert A Bailey)
Bull City Street Rodders
Carolina Hurricanes Foundation
Duke (Health-Education) Doing Good Community Grants
Gipson Family Foundation
Guirlinger Family Fund
Kevin & Lauretta Holloway Charitable Fund
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North Raleigh United Methodist Women
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Susan & Larry Yarger
Target
Wake Electric Care, Inc.

Individuals Donors

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Grace & Dan Fox
Judy & Don Fuchs
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Lauretta & Kevin Holloway
Pat Korpik
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Jeanice Lienard
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Mary Lovelock & Bob Chapman
Molly & Scott Mahoney
Cindy McCarty
Linda McSwiney
Julie & Larry Meese
Members of ReDesign Team ML57
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Katherine & Richard Merrill
Linda Molten
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Mary Moore
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Penny Morgan
Nancy & John Moses
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Sherrie & Bob Nichols
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Shelley & David Stirling
Phyllis Sullivan
Jan & Todd Taylor
Judy & Bill Thompson
Barbara & Jim Townson
Chris Uithoven
Susie Unruh
Keith VanDerwerken
Gail & Eric Vaughn
Carole Walker
Dixie & Richard Weale
Lisa Webster
Charlotte & Dennis Weldon
Julia & Charles Wells
Debra & Pitch Woolfolk
Nona & Jim Wright

Q: How can I donate to support philanthropic efforts and help make a difference in our community?

A: We have an **Open Your Heart** campaign each year and online donations are always appreciated using the QR code to the right, or:

- Visit: www.altriangle.org
- Select **Donate Now** to donate through PayPal or Cash App

Donations are tax deductible and benefit **all** philanthropic programs.

Carolina Hurricanes Foundation Grant

Receiving the grant for Assistance League from L to R: Martha Funsten, Nona Wright, Barbara Townson, Lisa Webster and Leslie Hodge.

We were delighted to accept a check for $15,000 from the Carolina Hurricanes Foundation during the Canes game on March 4, 2025. This Game Changer Grant supports children participating in the Operation School Bell program receiving new clothing, shoes, and supplies for school. It serves our shared mission to meet the health and education needs of children with a focus on impacting underserved populations. Thank you for your continued support, Carolina Hurricanes Foundation.

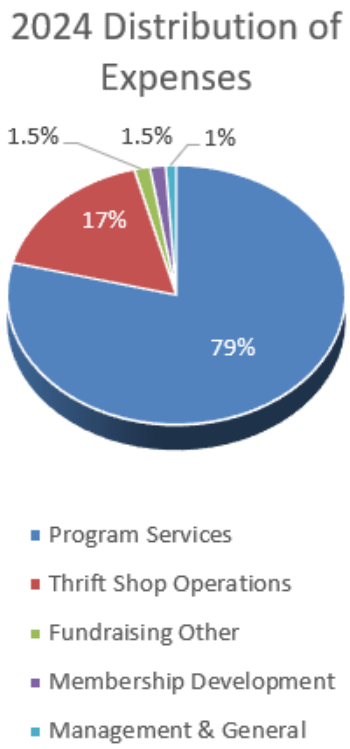
Financial Statement for Fiscal Year Ending May 31, 2024

Statement of Financial Position

Assets	2024	2023
Cash & Cash Equivalents	$ 475,156	$ 435,329
Prepaid Expenses	$ 8,424	$ 10,762
Inventories	$ 102,020	$ 98,167
Property & Equipment	$ 5,049	$ 6,534
Operating Lease Right of Use	$ 194,631	$ 137,919
Total Assets	**$ 785,280**	**$ 688,711**
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Liabilities	$ 2,970	$ 3,750
Deferred Revenue & Lease Liability	$ 194.631	$ 138,243
Net Assets	$ 587,679	$ 546,718
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	**$ 785,280**	**$ 688,711**

Statement of Activities

Support and Revenues	2024	2023
Thrift Shop Revenue	$ 309,546	$ 276,167
Contributions & Grants	$ 204,600	$ 213,114
Membership	$ 3,498	$ 4,530
Interest Income	$ 17,895	$ 6,222
Noncash Contributions	$ 31,036	$ 42,603
Other	$ 4,126	$ 3,723
Total Support & Revenues	**$ 570,071**	**$ 547,279**
Expenses		
Program Services		
Operation School Bell	$ 195,070	$ 194,739
Kid's Place	$ 22,348	$ 25,637
Women In Need	$ 20,097	$ 23,508
Scholarships	$ 169,000	$ 174,063
Community Outreach	$ 7,645	$ 108
Community Sharing	$ 4,918	$ 7,799
Total Program Services & Expenses	**$ 419,078**	**$ 445,854**
Support Services		
Fundraising (Thrift Shop) Expense*	$ 89,617	$ 84,790
Other Fundraising Expenses	$ 8,147	$ 7,913
Management & General	$ 9,388	$ 7,846
Membership Development	$ 3,510	$ 4,120
Total Support Services Expenses	**$ 110,662**	**$ 104,669**
Total Expenses	**$ 529,740**	**$ 550,523**
Increase (Decrease) In Net Assets	**$ 40,961**	**$ (3,244)**
Net Assets – Beginning of Year	**$ 546,718**	**$ 549,962**
Net Assets – At End of Year	**$ 587,679**	**$ 546,718**



The Highest Level of Recognition

Assistance League of the Triangle Area is committed to transparency and full disclosure of our financials. We encourage all donors to view our online profile which includes an overview of philanthropic programs, description of our operations, and concise historical metrics.

"GuideStar Platinum encourages nonprofit organizations to share their progress and results in important new ways—moving way beyond simplistic financial ratios—to reflect the changes organizations are making in the world."

- From GuideStar website
https://learn.guidestar.org/platinum

Thrift Shop expenses are occupancy costs only. There are no labor costs nor cost of goods sold. The A-Z Thrift Shop sustains itself and all monetary donations go directly to philanthropic programs.

Our reserve policy is to retain one year of operating expenses. Complete Financial Statements for the year ending May 31, 2024 are available upon request. EIN:56-2013094

Assistance League
P.O. Box 98477
Raleigh, NC 27624
(919) 875-8901

Visit the **A-Z Thrift Shop**
1621 North Market Dr. Raleigh, NC.
Hours of Operation: Wed. – Sat. 11 am – 4 pm

Visit **www.altriangle.org** for info & monthly events

Questions or to schedule a pickup of donations?
Call: **919-875-8901**

To request a tour of the **Assistance League Philanthropic Center** email: vicepresident@altriangle.org

3108 Glen Royal
Raleigh, NC.27617

Board of Directors

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Strategic Planning – Patti Lazoff

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Tracie Gant - CEO and Chief Strategist
Les Long - Entrepreneur
Michelle Mozingo – Wake County Public Schools
Jim Wright - Legal Counsel

Mission Statement

Volunteers transforming the lives of women, children and families through community programs.

Vision Statement

Essential needs are met in our community and families flourish through supporting education.

Values

Transforming Lives • Strengthening Community.

How Can You Support Assistance League?

- **Join:** Become a Member join@altriangle.org
- **Shop in Person:** A-Z Thrift Shop
- **Shop Online:** eBay.com/str/shopaltriangle
- **Email the Shop:** resale@altriangle.org
- **Donate:** Funds or Household Goods
- **Match:** Contributions through Employer Programs
- **Receive:** A-Z Thrift Shop weekly email
- **Follow Us:** On Instagram and Facebook

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Proofreaders: Martha Funsten, Anna Merrett, Barbara Townson, Lupe Boyle, Shelley Stirling, Lauretta Holloway & Nona Wright