



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**The Junior League of Austin (JLA) Kicks Off 2019, Promotes Healthy Eating in DVISD**  
*JLA Provides Food for 950 Students Through the Food In Tummies Weekend Backpack Program*

**AUSTIN** – The JLA Food In Tummies (FIT) program joined school administrators and program sponsors today at pep rallies at Del Valle Independent School District’s Baty and Hillcrest Elementary schools to cheer on students who are excited about FIT and teach them the importance of good nutrition and fitness. The JLA manages the FIT program in collaboration with Del Valle ISD, which provides easy-to-prepare weekend meals for Del Valle ISD students. JLA’s FIT members make strides each year in addressing childhood hunger in Central Texas.

“Nearly 1,000 students in Del Valle School District receive backpacks filled with at least eight nutritious items for 34 weeks each school year,” said The Junior League of Austin FIT Chair Rachel Plymire. “This helps battle weekend hunger that 1 in 4 children in our area face.”

Almost 90 percent of students in Del Valle ISD are considered economically disadvantaged and rely on school meals served as a part of the National School Lunch Program. Studies show that children who go hungry over the weekend have higher rates of absenteeism, difficulty concentrating, and negatively impacted classroom behavior.

“We are so grateful for our partnership with Del Valle ISD,” said The Junior League of Austin President Amy Hurt. “Our members love being part of this program where we are making a tangible impact in the children's lives. By feeding an entire student population currently experiencing food insecurity, we expect to see improved attendance at school and decreased mobility of families whose children take part in the National School Lunch Program.”

More than 200 JLA member volunteers are committed to cleaning, packing, and delivering over 7,500 pieces of food in backpacks to Del Valle ISD students each week. The backpacks contain breakfast, snacks, and dinner foods that include healthy fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat milk. Recipe cards, written in both English and Spanish, are also included in the bags, highlighting nutrition tips to share with the family.

“Thank you for the food you donated to us; and thank you for filling our empty tummies,” said one third grade student at Hillcrest Elementary.

FIT benefits the entire student populations of two schools in the Del Valle ISD. By feeding an entire student population that is currently experiencing food insecurity, school administrators have seen improved school attendance, improved student health, and other benefits. Ninety-eight percent of the FIT program costs go directly toward the food and backpacks provided to the kids. The cost to feed one student for one weekend is about \$5. For more information about FIT, visit <https://www.jlaustin.org/food-in-tummies/>.

### **The Junior League of Austin**

The Junior League of Austin is an organization of more than 2,500 women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving the community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable. On an annual basis, The Junior League of Austin contributes over \$800,000 to the Austin community and its members spend approximately 150,000 hours volunteering. For more information about the Junior League of Austin, call 512-467-8982 or visit [www.jlaustin.org](http://www.jlaustin.org).

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