



For Immediate Release

September 11, 2020

Victoria Yu, [fitpr@jlaustin.org](mailto:fitpr@jlaustin.org)

(737)-484-2636

**The Junior League of Austin (JLA) to provide 1,000 weekend meals each week to DVISD**

*Following its first-ever summer distribution, JLA will provide to-go weekend meal bags for DVISD families resuming this fall*

**AUSTIN**– Today The Junior League of Austin (JLA) began distributing weekend meal bags to families within the Del Valle Independent School District (DVISD) as part of its FIT – Food in Tummies program. FIT, currently in its eleventh year of service, is dedicated to eliminating weekend hunger and keeping students healthy and ready to learn. Approximately 1,000 weekend meal bags will be available, at designated pickup sites within DVISD, a change from FIT’s traditional classroom delivery.

Amid an unusual school year, FIT remains dedicated to promoting healthy eating and will continue to engage DVISD families through virtual cooking classes, recipe cards, and more.

Earlier this summer, JLA demonstrated unprecedented volunteer power and expanded FIT to feed families during its first-ever summer food delivery on June 25, 2020. Volunteers delivered 1,400 weekend meals and 2,000 donated masks to four remote meal sites located at elementary schools in the Del Valle ISD.

“Food in Tummies traditionally begins and ends with the 34-week school year, but during COVID-19, we saw a growing need for access to nutritious food,” said Carolyn Ragsdale, Food in Tummies Committee Chair. “At The Junior League of Austin, we are dedicated to our vision of eliminating weekend hunger in our community, so we mobilized quickly to serve additional meals this summer and pivoted to a new pickup method for this fall.”

To ensure the safety of volunteers and food recipients, FIT has implemented COVID-19 safety measures including temperature screenings and mask-wearing policies.

Since 2009, more than 250 JLA member volunteers commit approximately 200 hours each fall to packing and delivering over 8,000 food items in backpacks to 1,000 DVISD students every week during the school year. The backpacks contain breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snack foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat milk. Cards with recipes and nutrition-related activities, written in both English and Spanish, are also included in the bags.

Students can receive meals Monday through Friday as a part of the National School Lunch Program; however, the National School Lunch Program doesn't provide services during the weekend. FIT seeks to bridge the gap of the National School Lunch Program between Friday and Monday.

Feeding America [reports](#) that proper nutrition improves school attendance, health, and classroom behavior. Since the inception of FIT, school administrators have seen many of these benefits in the classroom. 95% percent of the FIT program costs go directly toward the food and backpacks provided to each student, and the cost to feed these students for one weekend is about five dollars per child. For more information about FIT and how you can help eliminate childhood weekend hunger, 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 160,000 hours volunteering. For more information about The Junior League of Austin, call 512-467-8982 or visit [www.jlaustin.org](http://www.jlaustin.org). You can help feed kids by donating at the [FIT donation page](#).

###