FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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JUNIOR LEAGUE OF AUSTIN KICKS OFF A HEALTHY SCHOOL YEAR WITH FIT - FOOD IN TUMMIES – PEP RALLIES AT BATY AND HILLCREST ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
One in Four Children in Texas is Hungry, FIT Steps in to Help Feed Over 1,500 Students Each Week of This School Year

AUSTIN – In an effort to battle childhood hunger in Central Texas, The Junior League of Austin today kicked off the seventh year of the FIT – Food In Tummies program with a healthy foods pep rally at Del Valle Independent School District’s Baty Elementary.

One in four kids in Texas are hungry and more than 88 percent of students in the Del Valle ISD are considered economically disadvantaged. The Junior League of Austin is filling this gap with FIT.

“FIT is a unique program that provides backpacks filled with nutritious food to keep more than 1,500 students fed throughout the weekend,” said Junior League of Austin Fit Chair Elizabeth Hadley. “More than 300 Junior League volunteers clean, pack and deliver the backpacks each week for 34 weeks. That’s over 12,000 pieces of food each week. We are proud to be making a difference for these children. It’s such a joy to see the look on their faces each Friday when they get their backpack and know we are making a difference.”

The students at Baty Elementary cheered along with Junior League volunteers, teachers and school administrators at the pep rally to get the kids excited about healthy foods and teach them about good nutrition and fitness. Studies show good nutrition can improve school attendance, student health and help the learning process.

“Children who go hungry over the weekend have higher rates of absenteeism and have difficulty with concentration and classroom behavior,” said Del Valle ISD Director of Communications and Community Relations Dr. Celina Bley. “It can take a child who has gone hungry through the weekend until Wednesday to recover, only to start the cycle over again each Friday. In Del Valle we have seen improved attendance since the Junior League of Austin brought FIT to Baty and Hillcrest Elementary and both parents and children have commented how much the food helps them and their families over the weekend. We are very thankful for this amazing partnership.”

In addition to the pep rallies, students at Baty Elementary and Hillcrest Elementary received their first FIT backpacks of the school year. Each week the backpacks contain breakfast, snack and dinner foods featuring healthy fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low fat milk. They also include recipe cards in both English and Spanish with nutrition tips to be shared with the family.

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The cost to feed one student through the weekend is about $5. FIT continues to make an impact in our community thanks to ongoing support from generous supporters including: Whole Foods Market, Nelson Puett Foundation, Carl C. Anderson Sr. and Marie Jo Anderson Charitable Foundation, Amplify Austin, Donald Hammill Foundation and The Lowe Foundation. For more information about FIT visit https://www.jlaustin.org/?nd=fit.

The Junior League of Austin
The Junior League of Austin is an organization of more than 2,400 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 more than $750,000 to the Austin community and its members volunteer approximately 100,000 hours with local non-profits. For more information about The Junior League of Austin, call 512-467-8982 or visit www.jlaustin.org.

FIT – Food In Tummies – Feeding Minds…Growing Bodies
The Food In Tummies (FIT) Program is a unique project of The Junior League of Austin (JLA) is designed to provide weekend nourishment to children in economically disadvantaged situations. FIT benefits the entire student populations of two schools in the Del Valle Independent School District, which currently report more than 88 percent of students, are considered economically disadvantaged. Every week for 34 weeks of the school year, the FIT program provides more than 1,500 students with backpacks full of healthy food along with bilingual recipe cards and nutrition tips. 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.

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