



Winter/Spring 2020

## ...and this ...is 2020

Yes, this is indeed 2020. Shout-out to Barbara Walters who early on invented the greeting appropriate to this particular year. We have entered the third decade of the New Millennium, and as always, we are ready to volunteer and step up.

Despite the world's current challenge in dealing with a deadly pandemic – probably what 2020 will be remembered for, we at MLGW are looking forward to a stellar year of volunteer efforts once they resume. As volunteers, we have the support and encouragement of our leadership who see the high value in helping our community be a better place by giving of ourselves to others. (See JT's Volunteer Spotlight last issue.)

This issue takes a look back at 2019's United Way Campaign in the fall and the holiday volunteering and giving season, Spread the Warmth, student robotics and solar cars, holiday parades, kettles and angels for the Salvation Army, a Volunteer Spotlight on Charles and Beth Henderson, our Volunteer Calendar and much more. Whew!

Don't forget to send your volunteer experiences, selfies and comments to VIP editor **Dan Hope**, Corporate Communications, at [dhope@mlgw.org](mailto:dhope@mlgw.org) or call me at 528-4557. And as always, **log your volunteer hours in Oracle!**

## Soup and Blankets Spread the Warmth

MLGW's Procurement and Contracts department held their third annual Spread the Warmth blanket and soup giveaway for the homeless in our community at Miller Park on Friday, December 13. Word got out, and a stream of very grateful people came by to enjoy hot soup and hot chocolate on a cold day while receiving blankets to help them stay warm these cold winter nights. **Demetria Bowers-Adair** and **Camela Mitchell** from Purchasing spearheaded the event and said, "Thank you to the entire Division and members of the community for their generous donations that helped us give more than 90 blankets and feed soup and chili to more than 100 homeless members of our community."



*Annie Mathis, Purchasing, (r) prayed for and encouraged one lady who received food and a blanket in the park during Spread the Warmth.*



*Front row: Shanikka Tate, Contract Management; Verkisserous Thompson, Contract Management; A'ricka Jackson, Purchasing; Demetria Bowers-Adair, Purchasing. Back row: Thaddeus Seaberry, Purchasing; Dorothy Coleman, Contract Management; Camela Mitchell, Purchasing; Tiffany Byrd, Supplier Diversity; Clifton Davis (who recently passed), Procurements, Contracts and Supplier Diversity.*

# MLGW United Way Campaign Meets and Beats its Goal

We did it! Time to let that accomplishment sink in... We met our 2019 United Way Campaign goal and even beat it! MLGW employees raised \$670,860.57 for United Way. It took the hard work of our talented United Way Steering Committee and the generosity of our caring employees along with several imaginative and fun fundraisers to beat our 2019 goal of \$665,000.

MLGW's campaign co-chairs **Kevin Watkins**, Performance Engineering, and **Chantal Lairy**, Customer Experience and Market Analysis, presented United Way President Kenneth Robinson with MLGW's big check at the Board meeting on February 5. Besides MLGW employees' pledges, several fundraisers were held from golf to basketball to fashion, comedy and rollerskating. Our Steering Committee and Key Persons found some innovative ways to raise donations.



*MLGW's United Way Campaign raised more than \$670,860! The big check was presented to United Way at the February 5 Board meeting.*

## United Way Golf

MLGW held its annual United Way Golf Tournament at Glen Eagle Golf Course in Millington September 27. A cadre of talented golfers participated, including several MLGW employees who know how to swing a golf club.

The tournament was greeted by warm, sunny weather as golfers enjoyed breakfast before hitting the links. Teams representing several companies attacked the course with gusto. Teams with the best scores were tallied as a four-man scramble.



*And they're off! MLGW Commissioner **Leon Dixon** rides shotgun with MLGW President **J.T. Young** driving as tournament golf carts race off to the links.*

MLGW's United Way Golf Tournament raised \$22,500 for United Way of the Mid-South. Thirty teams featuring 130 golfers participated. After the tourney, an awards dinner was held and the best players and teams were honored with some nice donated prizes. Now come the tall tales...



*MLGW volunteers staffed the check-in table at the MLGW/United Way Golf Tournament.*



# Rip the Runway

Elegance walked the runway at MLGW's third annual Rip the Runway Fashion Show on Sunday, December 8 at Esplanade on Cordova Station Ave. to raise funds for United Way.

Organized for the third year by **Sharika Hollingsworth**, Treasury Management, the fashion extravaganza featured local models in elegant garb walking the runway including some "super models" from MLGW. The Fashion Show included a vendor expo and shopping, much appreciated by the attending "glitterati." The event raised over \$4,000 for local United Way agencies.

United Way supports more than 68 agencies and 200 programs focused on health, financial stability and education in eight counties across the Mid-South (Shelby, Fayette, Crittenden, Desoto, Lauderdale, Tate, Tipton and Tunica).



*Wearing a stunningly colorful outfit, fashion show organizer, **Sharika Hollingsworth** strolls on the runway while the cameras watch.*

# B'Ball Tourney

They're baaaack... MLGW's United Way Basketball Tournament returned for 2019 under the tutelage of B'ball wizard **Kevin Watkins**, Performance Engineering and chair of MLGW's United Way Campaign. The tourney raised \$700, and attendees were treated to some fun competition.

Tournament games were played on Saturday and Sunday, November 2-3 at the Penny Hardaway Gym on Claybrook. In Saturday's first game, Gas



*MLGW players "raised the bar" competing in the resurrected MLGW United Way Basketball Tournament.*



*MLGW's Meter Reader basketball team won the coveted trophy by winning the tournament.*

Dept. vs Water Dept., Gas won. In the second game, Management vs Meter Readers, Meter Readers won. In Sunday's first game, Management vs Water, Management won. Sunday's second game was the championship with Meter Readers vs. Gas. This time the Meter Readers with MLGW President **J.T. Young** as a guest "ringer" won the game and the championship in a hard-fought contest.

## Tournament Results:

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> place - Meter Readers | 2 <sup>nd</sup> place - Gas Department   |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> place - Management    | 4 <sup>th</sup> place - Water Department |

# Comedy Bash with Costumes

Another component of MLGW's United Way Campaign was the Comedy Bash held Wednesday, October 30 at Savor Lounge on American Way. The Comedy Bash was hosted by **Bryant "Mouf Piece" Hannah** who also works in MLGW's Network and General Construction area. Four comedians had the audience doubled over in stitches the entire evening including the hilarious Mouf Piece, Tootie 2 Times, Reggie Jr. and **Derrick "Coco"**

**Smith**, who also toils for MLGW in Gas Distribution North. The show featured a costume contest, open mic, comedy show and DJ, but costumes were not mandatory.

MLGW's United Way Comedy Bash raised \$265 while passing out uproarious laughter, absolutely the best medicine!



*Going for laughs? The Comedy Bash crew shows off a few costumes at the MLGW United Way Comedy Bash.*

# Christmas Tree Angels

The Adopt an Angel Tree Program celebrated its 32<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary in Memphis this past holiday season. Introduced by the Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary in 1986, the first Angel Tree served 599 needy children and senior citizens. In recent years, over 4,000 children and seniors have been served per year. This year, Memphis Light, Gas and Water partnered with the Salvation Army to sponsor an Adopt an Angel to provide holiday gifts for 80 families.

Salvation Army volunteers came to pick up MLGW employees' donations on December 6.



MLGW adopted 80 families (30 seniors and 50 children) for Angel Tree this year. **Anita Mills**, Compensation HRIS and Angel Tree organizer, said, "I believe our organization impacted many lives with the gifts and love received this year. The Adopt an Angel Tree program was successful due to the contributions you all have made and I honor and salute you for the outpouring of love and support shown to the families. Again, the Compensation HRIS department would like to thank everyone who participated in the program to assure the families have a blessed holiday season." Employees fulfilled wish lists that the children and seniors requested. The angels requested items such as bikes, helmets, comforters, electric scooters, microwaves, clothes, apple ear pods, pot and pan sets, dolls, iPads and the list goes on.



# Sunless A-Blazing Race

A little rain didn't stop dozens of middle and high school teams from participating in MLGW's 2019 A-Blazing Race, though there was no sun to power the cars. Students gathered at the University of Memphis on October 25 to compete in the model solar car competition for grades six through 12. The 2019 A-Blazing Race is part of Engineering Day, or E-Day, an annual open house hosted by the University's Herff College of Engineering. Prior to the race, teams attended an engineering workshop at MLGW U.

## Middle School Notebook

Best Notebook - Kate Bond Middle School

School Best Design - Arlington Middle School

## Middle School Speed

1<sup>st</sup> Place - Kate Bond Middle School

2<sup>nd</sup> Place - Snowden Middle School

3<sup>rd</sup> Place - Arlington Middle School

## High School Notebook

Best Notebook - Lausanne Collegiate

Best Design - Overton High School

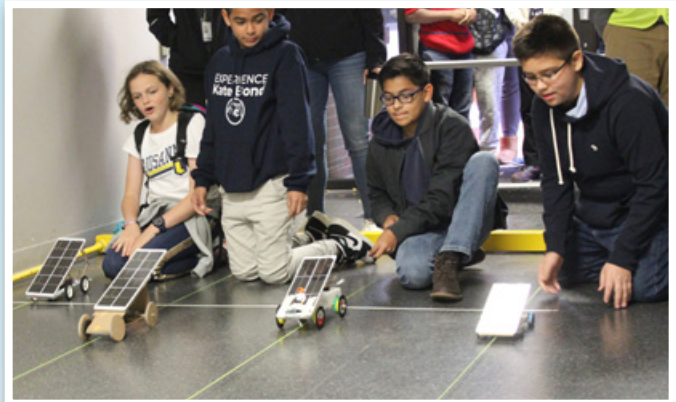
## High School Speed

1<sup>st</sup> Place - East T-STEM Academy

2<sup>nd</sup> Place - Houston High School

3<sup>rd</sup> Place- White Station High School

For race day, MLGW volunteers provided a kit containing a solar panel, battery holder and motor which participants used to design and build their own solar-powered vehicles, which raced on a 20-meter course. Rain meant the race had to be held indoors, so batteries subbed for sunpower. Below left are the winners.



*Moved inside due to sunless weather, student teams went inside the Herff Engineering Building to hold their "solar" car race.*



*MLGW organizers and volunteers **Beverly Perkins**, Corporate Social Responsibility, and **Oussama Terrab** and **Kyle Hyneman**, Transmission & Operational Planning and Crisis Management, prepare to greet student competitors.*



*Double winners Kate Bond Middle School proudly display their spoils from the A-Blazing Race. They won Best Notebook and Fastest Car in the Middle School category.*



# Robots and Racecars

MLGW and its Junior Engineer and Professional Engineer (JEPE) group held its annual Robotics Showcase on Friday, November 8 in the MLGW Administration Building's lobby. Area middle and high school students from Shelby County Schools participated, showing off all kinds of imagination and genius in their robotic creations, LEGO construction, an electric race car and much more.

Some of the schools who participated in the robotics event were John P. Freeman, Hutchison Middle School, White Station High, St. Mary's, Collierville, Raleigh Egypt, St. Benedict, Power Center Academy, Barret's Chapel and Bartlett High.

JEPE, TVA and MLGW volunteers teamed up once again to give the students an opportunity to demonstrate their creativity and engineering skills at the Robotics Showcase. "We're encouraging the next generation of STEM workers to keep learning and building," said JEPE's **Kyle Hyneman**, Transmission & Operational Planning and Crisis Management. Some of these future engineers may end up with jobs at MLGW!



*SVP and Chief Operating Officer **Alonzo Weaver** listens to students from East High School explain the construction and functions of their electric racecar.*



*J.P. Freeman Optional School students show their projects to a fellow Robotics Showcase student participant.*



*Tara Oaks Elementary students (l) explore the robotics project created by Collierville School students (r).*

# United Way Neon Skate

Just before Thanksgiving, MLGW employees strapped on their neon skates for a Neon Skate Party at East End Skating Rink on Mt. Moriah the evening of Thursday, November 14. Skaters were asked to wear neon colors for the event. Organized by **Carla Randle**, Residential Resource Center, the neon skaters raised \$215 for United Way.

"There wasn't a huge crowd, but it was a really good time," says **Kevin Watkins**, United Way campaign chair. "MLGW has a lot of talented professional skaters."



*Sometimes you need a little support... An East End employee (l) and **Kevin Watkins** (r), Performance Engineering and MLGW United Way campaign chair, help **Chantal Lairy**, Customer Experience and Market Analysis and United Way co-chair, stay upright on eight wheels and a slick floor at the skate party.*

# Volunteer Spotlight

## Two to Tango! Charles and Beth Henderson

It takes two to tango. A team! Power couple **Charles** and **Beth Henderson** were an MLGW volunteer team even before both were working for MLGW. Now that's dedication, but it also underscores a philosophy: Helping others is the best thing you can do, and they are a couple who loves to do things together.

Charles, who often goes by Chuck, took a State Tech Underground Utility course offered by the Division in 1996 which led to a full-time position the next year as an electric utility worker at the North Center. That adds up to 23 years here.

"It still feels like my first day," says Charles, now a crew leader in the Telecommunication department repairing and splicing fiber optic cable. "One of the most inspiring and career-building opportunities that I have learned is that while working here, 'the sky is the limit!'"

Beth started out as a call center temp in 2016, becoming permanent full-time the next year. Now she works in Purchasing. "Prior to me coming to MLGW," Beth remembers, "I would always accompany Chuck on MLGW volunteering assignments to man the booths at different events. I was fortunate to be hired into a department where volunteerism is the true heartbeat of our area. Our supervisor, **Randy Orsby**, and our late manager, **Clifton Davis**, jump on board with our volunteer visions. The amount of volunteer opportunities MLGW offers is like candy to a kid. For that I am grateful."

"Because MLGW has a gift of giving, I wanted to help in that effort," Charles says. "I wanted to donate my time to represent the company, manning the booth at Vesta Home Shows, Mid-South summer events, MLGW Conservation Days, the Southern Women's Show... I recall parades, and of course, school events as a DECA Judge."

What's DECA? The Distributive Education Clubs of America whose High School Division includes 215,000 members in 3,375 schools, and it includes almost



*Beth and Charles Henderson*

5,000 colleges. It's a 75-year-old organization that prepares high school and college students for the real world in the areas of marketing, finance, hospitality and management. Quite an effort! "My time judging in DECA events was my 'main event,'" Charles fondly recalls. "That's due to the looks on the faces of all those young students trying to find their way into becoming better students equipped for their next step in society. It's inspiring."

In fact, both Beth and Charles say DECA is their favorite volunteer

project. "When I served as a DECA judge for young entrepreneurs that was my favorite," Beth says. "To be able to hear the visions of these young minds that are going to eventually shape our community and world – I wish I had the time to do 'Team Read' at local schools teaching children their 'sight' words, but my schedule doesn't permit. Reading is my favorite pastime," she adds.

"I'm partial to Operation Feed and Juvenile Diabetes for reasons that really hit close to home," Beth says. "If I can't give the time, I give them the dime." Close to home because Charles' and Beth's grandson was diagnosed at eight with Juvenile Diabetes. And Operation Feed? "There's no reason for anyone to go hungry," Beth insists. "It breaks my heart to see elderly folks have to worry about food or having to decide whether to buy food or medication for themselves, or get food for their pets."

"I have a heart for the elderly. There's one elderly couple in our neighborhood we tend to dote on," Beth says. "Charles assists them with handyman jobs around their home and yardwork. Our granddaughter loves helping them with their flowers, too. I do grocery store runs, and I'm good for a cup of coffee and conversation. We take them to different outings at our expense. When you have the heart, you find the time."

Beth and Charles love the Christmas parades MLGW



participates in. This past holiday season, Beth got to drive the Conservation Girl car in the parade while Charles walked behind. “Or should I say, ‘danced’ behind,” adds Beth. “Chuck is a bit of a dancer...” They also worked this March’s Southern Women’s Show together staffing MLGW’s info booth.

The Hendersons volunteer a lot in the community, too. In their own Raleigh neighborhood, they founded and helped organize and lead a neighborhood association to address issues like dangerous speeders. “It was like the Indy 500,” Charles says. “After a young boy was hit by a car while riding his bike just a few houses down, my wife and I began a push to get a neighborhood association started to address these issues. Not only did we get a group of other volunteers to come aboard, but we got News Channel 3 out to raise our concerns. We even marched down to City Hall with State representative “2Shay” (Antonio) Parkinson. Long story short, we now have speed bumps to slow down speeders and even a ‘no vote’ stopping development of a new cemetery in our neighborhood,” Charles adds.

“We eventually served as neighborhood association president and vice president,” Beth says. “We have served as Democratic committee representatives for District 1, Ambassadors for the Memphis Police Department, added dog food to MIFA meal deliveries,

handed out food to the homeless and hosted a Bahamian foreign exchange student. We stay busy!”

There are benefits for volunteering and donating. “Charles and I won the auction with the best bid at the last-minute to have lunch with Mr. Young and his wife Deidre as part of last year’s Operation Feed Campaign,” Beth says. “We won by \$5.11. We enjoyed a wonderful lunch with them at Redfish on Union. And we didn’t talk about work at all. We had assisted with our Operation Feed campaign by offering ideas to generate funds which were quite profitable and sold tickets.”

In 2014, both Beth and Charles were honored recipients of the Kindle Award for Humanitarian Services awarded by the Loretta McNairy Organization at a formal ceremony at the Memphis Botanic Garden. “It’s all about helping someone else,” says Charles.

“It’s never too late to give,” Charles stresses to encourage potential volunteers. “Your time is even more valuable when you give it through volunteering. What do I get out of it? The completeness in helping others,” he adds. And Charles and Beth have three sons, two of whom are in the Navy, who have “inherited” their parents’ love of giving back.

Beth’s favorite quote is: “Volunteers do not necessarily have the time. They have the heart!” (--Elizabeth

Andrew). “So with this being said, the simplest act of kindness goes a long way,” she adds. “It is important to us that our existence serves a purpose and makes an impact in the community where we live and the lives of those we are exposed to. And I’m honored that my grand jewels (grandchildren) have picked up on our volunteer spirit. One of them in particular loves to help our elderly couple with their flowers in her yard. This is teaching her so much more than just helping, but its creating memories, planting skills, relationship building. It’s a win-win for everybody.”

Helping others by volunteering and helping in the community is indeed a win-win for everyone, too. Charles and Beth prove it every time they go out to help others – as a team. It’s a lesson in humanity for all of us.



**Charles and Beth Henderson** volunteer at the Whitehaven Holiday Parade together.

*Volunteer your time and give back to our community.*



# 2020 Spring Volunteer and Fundraising Calendar

Our usual fun and rewarding MLGW winter and spring volunteer and charitable events have been affected by the COVID pandemic. Most have been canceled or postponed. MLGW's volunteer and charitable events will resume when it is safe to do so. If you have any volunteer questions, please contact volunteer coordinator **Ken Mack**, Corporate Social Responsibility, at 528-4820 or [kmack@mlgw.org](mailto:kmack@mlgw.org)

## April 2020

- Postponed: Africa in April – TBA, Robert Church Park. Contact: **Ken Mack**, Corporate Social Responsibility, 528-4820 or [kmack@mlgw.org](mailto:kmack@mlgw.org)

**Don't forget to log your volunteer hours in Oracle including any hours spent volunteering to assist the community during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

*Volunteer your time and give back to our community.*

## Holiday Parades

Spreading holiday cheer, MLGW volunteers, Conservation Girl and the Terminator in his truck participated in two holiday parades in 2019 – the Whitehaven Holiday Parade on Saturday, November 23 and the Beale Street Holiday Parade on Saturday, December 14—to bring some holiday cheer to members of our community. The Whitehaven parade marches



*Strutting down Beale is a ton of fun for MLGW volunteers during the Beale Street Holiday Parade.*



*MLGW volunteers engaged the crowd with treats and info at the Whitehaven Holiday Parade.*

annually down Elvis Presley Blvd., and MLGW volunteers quite enjoy participating thanks to an enthusiastic crowd. A couple of weeks later, MLGW volunteers celebrated the holidays on Beale Street, walking behind the Terminator truck and tossing treats and energy-saving materials to the holiday crowds enjoying the parades in our downtown entertainment district.

# Volunteer Views

Photos of MLGW volunteers are viewable on your home computer or mobile device in our volunteer photo albums at [www.flickr.com/photos/mlgwpix/albums](http://www.flickr.com/photos/mlgwpix/albums).



**Kettle Campaign:** Angel Trumpets! **Bill Bullock**, retired, and **Daniel Hochstein**, Performance Engineering, played holiday music on their trumpets in front of the Walgreens on Main in December. MLGW Kettle Campaign volunteers raised more than \$476 for the Salvation Army and the women and children who reside at their Memphis Purdue Center of Hope.



**Fall Gas Safety Day:** MLGW volunteers **Clift Phillips**, **Darrie Jenkins** and **Thomas O'Leary**, Gas Engineering, staffed information tables at the Germantown Lowe's Store as MLGW held Gas Safety Awareness Day on Friday, November 15. Six local Lowe's Stores hosted a small army of volunteers who talked with customers and passed out natural gas and pipeline safety information.



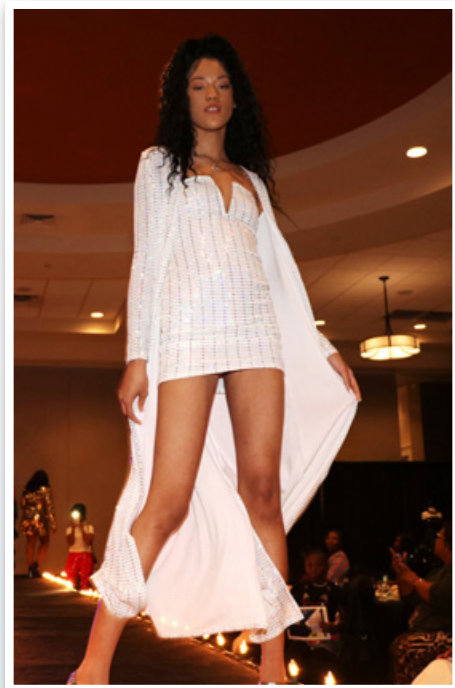
**Fall Gas Safety Day:** **Rick Henderson**, Gas Engineering, offers a Lowe's customer information on gas safety at Gas Safety Awareness Day at the Lowe's on Perkins as (l-r) **Ike Griffith**, Gas Engineering, and **Chris Maclin**, Gas System Integrity, staff the table passing out info on Call Before You Dig, gas appliance safety, and gas leak recognition and response.



# Volunteer Views



**Spread the Warmth:** With St. Mary's Cathedral in the background, MLGW's Purchasing area volunteers served hot soup and hot chocolate to area homeless people.



**Rip the Runway:** Supermodels strut their stuff to raise funds for United Way.



**Beale Street Holiday Parade:** MLGW volunteers pose in front of Conservation Girl's car as they prepare to walk in the Beale Street Christmas Parade.



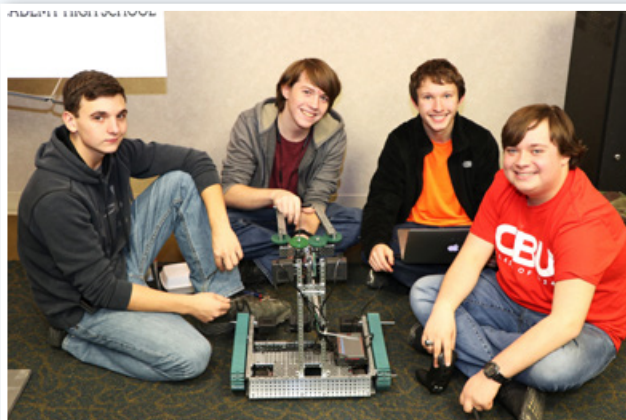
# Volunteer Views



**United Way Golf:** MLGW golfers get ready to attack the links at Glen Eagle Golf Course in Millington to raise funds for United Way.



**AABE Scholarship Golf Tourney:** MLGW golfers participated in the AABE Scholarship Fund Golf Tournament at Quail Ridge Golf Course in Bartlett October 20, raising funds for scholarships for deserving Memphis students.



**Invasion of the Robots:** Some pretty advanced, complicated robotics creations rolled into MLGW's Robotics Showcase on November 8, including the large amazing robot created by these Bartlett High scientific experts.



**Invasion of the Purple Robot:** Color-coordinated, a purple robot and purple shirts combine to good effect as Tara Oaks students display one of their robots at the Robotics Showcase.



**Whitehaven Holiday Parade:** Elvis Presley Blvd. was the venue for the Whitehaven Holiday Parade as MLGW volunteers in green accompanied by the Terminator in his truck pass out info and treats to parade watchers.