On September 18, 2015, the Little Tree Preschool in Anniston hosted an appreciation day for the community service men and women from all branches of the military. Personalized invitations were sent inviting them to attend a cookie social hosted by the children. More than 24 special guests were welcomed by the children, giving each of them a special gift, cookies, and drinks. The children later taught their new friends how to sign the words thank you, soldier, friend, cookie, and drink. Lasting friendships were established that day.

Appreciation Day for our Service Men and Women

iPad donation
Sunny King Ford of Anniston donated 36 iPads to Jacksonville Residential School children. These iPads will be used for educational and communication needs. Thank you Sunny King Ford.

Be sure to visit our new website at www.learning-tree.org
Happy New Year to all of our friends and supporters this past year!
And to all of our dedicated employees . . . we appreciate you!

Thank you.

Thrivent Financial

Thrivent Financial is a membership organization of Christians with a mission to help people manage their finances confidently and live generously. Thrivent, in collaboration with its members, provides both educational and charitable support to individuals, churches and nonprofit organizations throughout the community. Thrivent is a not-for-profit fraternal benefit organization that provides its members with benefits that can be used for charitable giving. Thrivent Choice is a charitable grant program that allows eligible members to recommend nonprofit organizations where Thrivent Financial will distribute part of its charitable outreach funds each year. In 2014, nearly $55 million Choice Dollar grants were awarded. The Learning Tree was recently added to their directory of participating organizations. For more information on Thrivent Financial or their Choice Dollar grants, please call David Buckhaults at 251-443-5661.

Making Strides

Bessie, a student at The Learning Tree Tallassee, is now attending Tallassee High School. Every day she attends a PE class from 8:40 a.m. to 9:40 a.m. She loves basketball and plays really well! Bessie has adjusted well to the transition and loves to go. Matt Coker, Principal of Tallassee High School said, “Bessie is doing great and I hope she can enroll in more classes in the future.”
Angling for Autism Fishing Tournament
The second annual Angling for Autism fishing tournament held October 24, 2015 at Winyl Creek State Park in Alexander City, was a huge success. Sixty boats registered that morning in hopes to win the top prize of $1,500. The Learning Tree paid out ten places and offered an optional big fish pot with a $7030 split. There were also $100 prizes for the top parent/child team and the top male/female team. The 1st place winner was Chad and Chris Miller with the highest weight of 14.17 lbs. They also won the big fish pot which was $413. The 2nd place winner ($1,000) went to John Poland and Rob Lee with 13.07 lbs. The 3rd place ($800) went to Norman Browning and Don Blevie. They also won the second big fish prize of $177. 4th place ($600) went to Alan Blalock and David Blalock; 5th place ($500) went to Tim Lawrence and Heath Harrell; 6th place ($400) went to Steven Ingram and Amelia Ingram, they were also the winners of the parent/child team. 7th place ($300) went to Steve Dinnson and Steve Collins; 8th place ($200) went to Rusty and Ronnie Maas; 9th place ($150) went to Josh and Jimmy Hill; and 10th place ($100) went to Ken Walters and Jason Beasley. The prize for top male/female team ($100) went to Marty and Kim Giddens. Thanks to all of our anglers that participated. A big thank you goes out to Mr. Barry Corbman, Coach of the Wetumpka High School fishing team, for handling the weigh in for us again this year. We also appreciated Kerinanne Castleberry who came out early to help with registrations and tickets sales, Ryan Ziegennfelder who helped check live wells, Cory Hammonds for assisting with the weigh in, Kerrianne Castleberry who came out early to help with registrations and tickets sales, Ryan Ziegennfelder who helped check live wells, Cory Hammonds for assisting with the weigh in, Ashley Hammonds for taking photos, Laci Hammonds and Chesney Russell for selling tickets, and our Executive Director, Dr. Marc Williams and Jim Sears for checking the boats in at the time of weigh in. A very special thanks to Dallas Weldon, Stephanie’s husband, who worked the early morning shift checking live wells, “blasted off” the boats at safe daylight, and helped Mr. Corbman with the weigh in.

A big thanks to our sponsors
Bama Busweser, AES Industries, Tallassee True Value; Lyon, Fry, Cadden Insurance; PrimeSouth Bank; A.M.P.S.; Trustmark Bank, E&I, Inc., Tallassee Walmart, Jeffcoat-Trant, Inc., Tallassee Automotive & Tallassee Rotary Club

The Learning Tree Tallasse celebrates 10 years
The Learning Tree Tallasse celebrated 10 years of service in August. Members from the Resource Development Committee, arranged a special day of celebration, food, fellowship and tours of the school. Dr. Marc Williams, Executive Director, welcomed everyone. Whitney Hester gave a brief history of The Learning Tree and how the Tallassee campus got started. Robert Payne, Mayor of Tallassee, presented Dr. Marc and Whitney with a Proclamation from the City of Tallassee highlighting the Anniversary. Guests in attendance were Dr. John Caldwell a member of the Board of Directors, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Brown, Mr. and Mrs. George McCain, and local business owners, Mrs. Brooke Rigby of Studio B Dance Center and Mrs. Suzannah Wilson of Suzannah’s Photography. The Resource Development Committee included Laurie Rygiel, HR Management Solutions; Michone Roys, Director, Chamber of Commerce; Suzannah Wilson, Suzannah’s Photography; Kim Adams with the Alabama Power Company; Laura Leigh Peters with Community Home Care and Hospice.

The children in Tallassee would like to thank the Elmore County Community Foundation for the generous grant to improve the playground that they enjoy so much. The playground improvements made the area usable for the children to play safely again. Some of the improvements included replacing deteriorated boards on the fort, pressure washing the swing set and the fort, replacing the swings and chains, repainting the swing set and re-staining the fort. The Elmore County Community Foundation is an affiliate of Central Alabama Community Foundation and offers citizens in Elmore County the opportunity to build long-term support for their community.
United Way Day of Action

The Learning Tree Aniston is a United Way Partner Agency. Their Day of Action is an annual signature event with hands-on volunteer opportunities occurring across the community. Through a coordinated effort, companies allow their employees to take time off to work on projects that will improve the community and help local non-profit agencies. On June 19, 2015, five volunteer employees from Auto Custom Carpets teamed up for the The Little Tree Preschool to make repairs and updates to the classrooms. New metal storage cabinets were installed for cleaning supplies to be safely locked away and the bathrooms were painted for a fresh new look. Volunteers came prepared to get their hands dirty and worked in full force from 8am until 3pm. United Way of East Central Alabama has become an important extended family for the Anniston and Jacksonville school locations. As a result of their help and support, community awareness and involvement has increased tremendously.

Honda Volunteer Day

On July 25, 2015, Honda Manufacturing of Alabama coordinated a volunteer work day at The Little Tree Preschool of Anniston. Six volunteers from Honda assisted staff and parents in the removal of overgrown bushes and trees in front of the school. They also provided mulch and ferns to improve the entrance areas of the school providing a more welcoming appearance for visitors and parents.

Honda also donated $100 for each volunteer that worked that day. The Little Tree Preschool is very proud of the new look and appreciate all of the hard work. The $500 raised will help fund enrichment classes for the preschool, including dance, music, and art.

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Community Helpers Day

On September 25, 2015, the Little Tree Preschool celebrated “Community Helpers Day.” Each police and fire unit in the area was delivered an invitation to receive a gift of appreciation from the preschool students, which included a “Survival Kit” gift bag; a pack of lifesavers for the many times they have been a life saver; a pack of Starburst candies for that burst of energy they often need; paper clips to help hold them all together during emergencies; and a Mounds candy bar for the “mounds” of courage they have to face each day to keep us all safe. The police officers gave sticker badges to kids to be honorary police officers for the day. Each child was able to get in a police car and see the how the lights work. The firemen came with 2 fire trucks and Sparky the fire dog. Each child received a fire helmet, bracelet, and a firemen’s badge. When sirens blared and lights flashed the children squealed with delight. The very special guests also joined in some classroom work. 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5th Annual Chip in for Autism® golf tournament

The 5th Annual Chip In for Autism golf tournament was Friday, October 23, 2015 at Azalea City Golf Course. More than $33,000 was raised for this year to benefit boys and girls at Woody’s Song School in Mobile. The event was coordinated by Cindy Fulford, mom to Woody’s Song School students, Sam and Cale. A special thank you to Cindy and all of the Woody’s Song School families that worked tirelessly to make the tournament a success. After a beautiful day on the links, more than 80 golfers were treated to dinner courtesy of The Hungry Owl. Many thanks to title sponsor, HPC Pharmacy and the other sponsors who made this event a success. Chip in for Autism is the only event solely benefiting Woody’s Song School.

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Volunteers from Honda Manufacturing of Anniston
Learning Tree Supporters Receive Recognition at Local and State Level

Dr. Hanes Swingle and Ms. Angie Cieutat were recognized recently for their contributions to the community and to The Learning Tree. Dr. Swingle received the Distinguished Advocate of the Year award at the 59th Mobile ARC Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet for his work as Director of the University of South Alabama’s Autism Diagnostic Clinic. Dr. Swingle was recognized for his lifelong dedication to research, teaching and caring for children with autism spectrum disorders. Ms. Cieutat received the Promising Young Leader award at the Mobile ARC Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet, as well as the State award at the 2015 DisAbility Conference in Orange Beach Alabama for her work with Kid’s at The Learning Tree. Kid’s provides the children at Woody’s Song School and the Residential School with experiential learning experiences outside the regular curriculum. Ms. Cieutat plans science, art and outdoor activities, as well as field trips for the children. She works tirelessly to make sure that the children have fun, challenging activities to enjoy.

Mobile Premier Pediatric Dentistry

Mobile Premier Pediatric Dentistry delivered two cases of toothbrushes from Patterson Dental to The Learning Tree Residential School. We are grateful for all that you do to support our kids!

Care Carnival benefits Woody’s Song School

More than $2,300 was raised when Hayley’s Bar in Downtown’s LoDa District hosted a street carnival benefiting Woody’s Song School in November. The Care Carnival featured raffle items, carnival games and live music hosted by local musicians. The event was organized by University of South Alabama student, Brittany Mistich, Brittany, a bartender at Hayley’s, was completing a practicum at Woody’s Song School and wanted to give back to the school. Her hard work paid off by raising much needed funds for Woody’s Song School and increased awareness as well. We’d like to thank everyone that made the event a success!

Thankful for Gulf Distributing

Recently one of the Learning Tree kids paid a special visit to Gulf Distributing to say “Thank you” for the support that they give our children. He was invited for a special tour of their facilities and handed out candy to the employees. For a number of years, the company has provided Christmas gifts for the children in the residential program, providing toys, clothing, furniture and bedding. In addition, each year they provide iPads for students who use them to develop their verbal communication skills. Their special visitor had a great time touring the cooler and the warehouse riding on their golf cart. Thank you to each employee at Gulf Distributing, for making our kids holidays brighter!

University of South Alabama’s Alpha Epsilon Delta

On a warm fall day in November, students from the University of South Alabama’s Alpha Epsilon Delta visited the Able Court campus and washed 12 vans for the Residential program and Woody’s Song School. Alpha Epsilon Delta is a National honor society, as well as a service organization for students preparing for careers in the graduate health professions (medicine, dentistry, optometry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, and more). Our vans are essential to our organization and are constantly on the go. A big thank you goes out to these hard working students!

MOBILE REGION (cont.)

Thank you to the Kendall Family!

Ed and Allison Kendall, along with other family and friends provided turkey and all the trimmings on Thanksgiving Day for more than 60 staff and students at The Learning Tree’s Mobile campus. Thank you for preparing such a delicious Thanksgiving feast. We are thankful for the Kendall family!

The Mobile Campus Has a Very Special Visitor

Santa’s helpers played by The Learning Tree-Mobile staff, Frank Snyder and Jasmine Clinton put everyone in the Christmas spirit at The Learning Tree Mobile Campus’ annual Christmas Party. The children enjoyed food donated by Naman’s Catering, Lenny’s Subs #463 and Foochakly’s – Semmes. Each child received several gifts that were donated by Gulf Distributing and Ron Cieutat. The party was enjoyed by all of the children and the staff as well.

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Ed and Allison Kendall, along with other family and friends provided turkey and all the trimmings on Thanksgiving Day for more than 60 staff and students at The Learning Tree’s Mobile campus. Thank you for preparing such a delicious Thanksgiving feast. We are thankful for the Kendall family!
Thank you to our friends and supporters.
Holiday Party Time!

The Residential School in Jacksonville’s holiday party started with a Christmas play performed by the children. Each child had a special part, portraying winter activities, from Santa’s workshop, from sledding and building a snowman, to baking gingerbread cookies. After the play, there was a very special visitor. Santa Claus sat with each child by the Christmas tree and asked them about their wishes, took a picture, and presented them with a bag of gifts. Following gifts they continued the celebration with their family and friends with lots of food and cake.