Birmingham’s “Wheels for Hope Charity Gala” to Benefit Learning Tree

Since its founding in the late 1960s, the Birmingham Automobile Dealers Association (BADA) and the Alabama Auto Show have supported their industry through legislative representation and educational programs. But they also have sought to reach out to the surrounding community to fulfill needs, particularly the needs of children.

“The franchised dealerships are passionate about giving back to the community, whether it is individually per dealership or through the Birmingham Automobile Dealers Association,” said Jennifer Whisenant, executive director of BADA and producer of the Alabama Auto Show. “It is a privilege to support and strengthen the communities where we live and work.”

Each year, the Alabama Auto Show, along with the Auto Charity Golf Tournament, generate increased opportunities for charitable contributions to children’s charity organizations in the Jefferson/Shelby County area. Specifically, the BADA Board of Directors selects charities to become beneficiaries of the Alabama Auto Show “Wheels for Hope” Charity Gala based on grant applications. They look for organizations that benefit children in some way, whether through health, education, or other arenas and that serve the majority of their clients within the community.

“The Charity Gala is a terrific way to kick off the Alabama Auto Show,” Whisenant said. “It’s a wonderful opportunity for dealerships to be represented and for our associates to be represented at a heartwarming event.”

Selected to benefit from the April 1st “Wheels for Hope” event at The Theodore are Ady’s Army, The Bell Center, Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Alabama, Children’s Harbor, The Learning Tree, Little Hands Serving Hearts, Restoration Academy, Shelby County Arts Council, Sight Savers America, and United Ability.

2020 Alabama Auto Show
Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center
Thursday, April 2nd – noon to 9pm
Friday, April 3rd and Saturday, April 4th – 10am to 9pm
Sunday, April 5th – 10am to 6pm

2020 and 2021 vehicles from major brands
Kids Zone
Tickets are $8 for ages 16 and up (free for 15 and under)
Military and senior citizen discounts available

Wheels for Hope Charity Gala
The Theodore
Wednesday, April 1st – 6:30pm
Contact the BADA for ticket options – info@bhamauto.org
Message from the Executive Director, Dr. Marc Williams:

It is hard to believe it is 2020! The dedicated work of our board, staff, and volunteers, brought us much success over the past year. We realized tremendous program growth across the state by establishing four ABA clinics and a new Birmingham Regional office. These opportunities will allow us to reach many more children and families that need our help.

Thank you all for your ongoing support and dedication. We know the year ahead will bring new challenges, but I believe by setting goals and working together we will enjoy yet another successful year.

Happy new year!

Congratulations to The Learning Tree’s Employees and Supervisors of the Month for 2019

The employees and supervisors of the month are selected by management and recognized for their hard work and dedication to the mission of The Learning Tree. Each category is nominated by their supervisors and voted on by the management team. An overall annual winner is selected by region and from those winners an agency wide winner will be selected. Thank you to each nominee for your hard work and commitment to the children that we serve.

Employees of the Month

Auburn/Tallassee

January: Dashanti Robinson
March: Kourtney Berry
May: Arista Hunter
June: Ratressa Perry
August: Doretha Davis
October: Markell Howard
December: Rdelius Davis

Jacksonville/Anniston

January: Candi Sherrill
February: Alexias Ricks
March: Maliqua Jackson
April: Maurice Toyer
May: Leanne Harry
June: Alicia Kelley
July: Michael Taylor
August: Lisa Jordan
September: Starr Elston
October: Sheyna Bibbs
November: Tarribian Harris
December: Katherine Chatmon

Mobile

December: Jewel Miller
January: Jana Blades
February: Charles Nobles
March: Matt Skelton
April: Jimmie Lafitte
May: Ethan Maples
June: Essence Jones
July: Javis Robinson
August: Tiffany Preston
September: Amanda Danis
October: Danielle Laster
November: Latasha Thompson
December: Alexis Brinkley

Supervisors of the Month

Auburn/Tallassee

February: Maurice Stroud
May: Robert Cattage
June: Britney Smith
July: Chris Black
August: Rogelyn Taylor
October: Naketta Tatum
December: Kenneth Martin

Jacksonville/Anniston

January: Charles Imafidon
February: Shunnika Teague
March: Aldarius Martin
April: Erica Cosper
May: Kayla Saint Eliard
June: Omega Pulliam
July: Sarah Garner
August: Laura Hughes
September: Kody Gamble
October: Catina Swain
November: Rajea Gillespie
December: Dawn Turner

Mobile

December 18: Annie Boykin
January: Mack “Sonny” Vise
February: Nicole Watkins
March: Tijuana Hopkins
May: Sydney Boak
June: Linda Eubanks
August: Tevicia Hamilton
September: Laytonia Harris
October: Kristin Davis-Armstrong
November: Olivia Sane
December: Jasmine Goss
The Learning Tree is grateful for the support of local and state foundations, business and government support from across the state in 2019.

- Elmore County Commission donated $2,500 to support the creation of an adaptive living space at the residential school in Tallassee.
- Walmart donated $1,000 in support of Jacksonville’s Holiday Helping Hearts campaign.
- The Little H.A.P.I.E. Tree Preschool in Auburn received $1,500 from the East University Walmart Neighborhood Marketplace.
- America’s First Credit Union donated $1,000 in support of Jacksonville’s Holiday Helping Hearts campaign.
- Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama awarded $49,994 to Anniston’s Little Tree Preschool to provide preschool support to low income children.
- Ben May Charitable Trust awarded $10,000 to The Learning Tree in Mobile for the construction of a new playground for the programs on Able Court, the Residential School, Woody’s Song School and Growing Independence Behavioral Services.
- General Dynamics donated $1,500 to the Jacksonville Residential program to support the Holiday Helping Hearts campaign.
- Walmart donated $1,000 to the Jacksonville Residential program to provide recreational therapy.
- The Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church’s Greek Fest donated $3,000 to Woody’s Song School in honor of Skev Karavokiros.
- Greater Anniston Business and Professional Association on behalf of the Sunny King Classic Golf Tournament donated $3,500 to support the Little Tree Preschool in Anniston.
- The Joseph Treadwell Charitable Foundation awarded $15,000 toward the Kilborn Kids program at Mobile’s Woody’s Song School and the Residential School.
- The Shug Jordan Walmart Neighborhood Market donated $1,000 to support the Little H.A.P.I.E. Preschool in Auburn.
- The Catranis Family Charitable Foundation donated $2,000 to support Woody’s Song School in honor of Skev Karavokiros.
- Walmart donated $2,000 for the Little Tree Preschool in Anniston.
- The C.D., Helen & Jeff Glaze Foundation awarded $2,000 to The Learning Tree in Mobile for the construction of the Able Court playground.
- Honda Manufacturing of Alabama donated $3,000 to support Growing Independence Behavioral Services in Anniston.
- The Walmart Distribution Center in Opelika donated $2,500 for the Little H.A.P.I.E. preschool.
- Climate Flow, LLC of Anniston donated $200 to support recreational therapy services at the Jacksonville campus.
- The Crampton Trust awarded $5,000 to be used for the construction of the Able Court playground.
- The Caring Foundation and the AL Civil Justice Foundation each awarded $2,500 to Growing Independence Behavioral Services.
Jacksonville Campus students attend Alabama State Fair and grew the best pumpkin!

Students participated in Twin Day, Super Hero Day, and College Team Day at Jacksonville campus for Homecoming week. They also attended a pep rally at Jacksonville High School to cheer on a fellow student and the Golden Eagles!
Otter Creek Venue Hosts Classic Country Gala

Last summer guests were sizzling southern style, in their polished boots and delicate lace. The 8th gala event was themed Classic Country Gala. The presenting sponsor was Pediatrics Plus is a local pediatrician office who are committed to taking great care of the children in the community. They have been sponsoring supporters of the annual gala for several years and we are grateful for their continued support.

This event is the largest fundraiser in the northern region in support of The Learning Tree school programs in Anniston and Jacksonville. Over $28,000 was raised through ticket sales, sponsorships, pre-event donations, on-site pledges and auction donations. A large silent auction added to the fun and excitement.

The gala was held at Otter Creek Farmstead & Distillery; an elegant venue, located in Ohatchee, Alabama. Local Joes, from Rainbow City, Alabama provided catering. Guests enjoyed a classic low country boil, with southern inspired side dishes. Dessert included a wonderful mouthwatering watermelon shortcake, and a decadent chocolate mousse. Otter Creek Farmstead & Distillery also provided the top shelf cocktail and wine options at the full bar, along with ice cold domestic and import beers.

Smokey Jones and the 3 Dollar Pistols, a classic country band out of Atlanta, Georgia, provided the music for the evening. Their honky tonk sound filled the dance floor where guests showed us their best moves! Once again, Goodfella’s Gaming delivered on another fun filled casino night with Poker tables, Blackjack, Roulette, Craps, and a new Money Wheel.

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS:

Title Sponsor
Pediatrics Plus of Anniston, Alabama

Advocate Sponsor
ICS Industrial Communications Services

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Dr. Michael Johnson and Assoc., Canvas, RMC Health System, The Bright & Bradley Families, CDP Employee Association, Jacket Medical Supply

Supporter Sponsors
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Friend Sponsors
Woodard Brothers Grading, Cherokee Electric Coop, Extreme Auto Spa, Wakefield’s, CG&J Inc., Dr. and Mrs. James Williams

With the 2019 event behind us...our sights are set on 2020 plans for another successful Classic Country Gala! Cheers!
Angling for Autism Fishing Tournament
The sixth annual Angling for Autism fishing tournament was once again a success. It was held November 9, 2019 at Wind Creek State Park in Alexander City. Fifty boats registered bright an early 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 70/30 split. There was also $100.00 prize for the top parent/child team and a $100.00 prize for the top male/female team. The winner ($1,500) was Steven Ingram fishing with his 7-year-old daughter Abby with the top weight of 15.52lbs. They also won the first big fish pot which was $343.00 as well as the parent/child category for $100. Second place ($1,000) went to Brent and Payton Goggins with 13.32lbs. Third place ($800) went to Robbie Pritchard and Lynn Pritchard. Fourth place ($600) went to William Hodo and Myles Palmer. Fifth place ($500) went to Ronnie Kelly and Todd Broderway. Sixth place ($400) went to Travis Miller and Chris Miller. Seventh place ($300) went to Josh Lock and Rodney Weldon. Eighth place ($200) went to Derrick Grooms. We had a tie for ninth and tenth place. We combined both places so ($125) went to Steve Morgan and Jeff Tapley and ($125) went to Felton Langley. Second big fish went to Michael Ward and Rob Griffith for $147.00. Thank you to all of our anglers! A big thank you to Dallas Weldon for handling the weigh in for us again this year. He also was there bright and early to check live wells, and “blasting off” the boaters at safe daylight. Also, Whitney Watson came out to help with registrations early in the morning. Thanks also to our afternoon help at the weigh-in; Brittney Hornsby for helping with the data entry, Ramona Heil-Norris for checking the boats in and taking pictures, Sheila Sears for taking pictures and Luke and Madeline Weldon for returning the fish to the lake.

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS
Thanksgiving at Tallassee School
We had a wonderful turnout for the annual Thanksgiving feast. We would like to thank Ms. Dianne McMeans and Dr. and Mrs. John Caldwell for providing the delicious food. The gym was transformed into a cozy dining room setting. It was our pleasure to serve our family and friends. We served a large display of traditional Thanksgiving trimmings, and let’s not forget about the caramel and red velvet cakes for dessert! It was so heartwarming to see the students, their parents and staff sharing time together talking and having a great time.

Stealth Fastpitch
A local travel softball team came to the Tallassee residential school to wrap Christmas gifts for the kids. Madeline Weldon, a Stealth player said, “I look forward to this project every year.” “It makes me feel good to do something to help out,” she added. The girls met Austin, one of the students, and enjoyed hearing about his accomplishments since starting school at the Learning Tree in the fall. Stealth Fastpitch is managed by Kevin Singleton and coached by Branndi Cook and Kris Easterwood.
The first annual, pre-holiday event “BREWSGIVING” was hosted at Hop City. Beers and wines were featured throughout the evening, along with specialty auction items. Ferus Artisan Ales donated 100% of their sales to benefit The Learning Tree programs.

This meet and greet event at Hop City was sponsored by International Wines and Craft Beer and Ferus Artisan Ales. Many thanks to Drew Jones with International Wine and Angela Richter the Socialite Sommelier at Hop City Craft Beer & Wine.

Birmingham Open House
Growing Independence Behavioral Services celebrated their clinic opening in Birmingham located at 2233 Cahaba Valley Drive. The Shelby County Chamber of Commerce conducted an official ribbon cutting. Guests enjoyed refreshments while learning more about the services for preschool & school-aged children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Three other outpatient clinics are located in Anniston, Montgomery and Mobile.
9th Annual “Chip in for Autism”
The 9th Annual “Chip in for Autism” Golf Tournament benefitting Woody’s Song School raised nearly $28,000 with more than 70 golfers. The event, sponsored by HPC Specialty Pharmacy, kicked off with a shotgun start on Friday, October 18, 2019 at Azalea City Golf Club. Proceeds benefit the boys and girls at Woody’s Song School in Mobile. Each year, Cindy Fulford, mom to Sam and Cale, devotes her life to this event. This event would not be possible without Cindy and all of the families who work tirelessly to make sure the tournament is a success. After a beautiful day on the links, the golfers were treated to dinner courtesy of Crawdats Catering and a host of prizes. Many thanks to title sponsor, HPC Pharmacy and to all of the sponsors for their generosity. Chip in for Autism is the only event that solely benefits Woody’s Song School.

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Telecom Pioneers
Tide Marine Supply Co.
USA Psychology Department
Boyd Whigham – In honor of Ted Kendall
Zoghby’s Uniforms

**Christmas Fun**
The students and staff at the Mobile Campus had a very merry Christmas! The children enjoyed Pajama Days, building gingerbread houses, parties and visits with Santa Claus. The Little Tree Preschool fun at their Polar Express Pajama Party. Miss Allie’s Class at Woody’s Song School visited Santa at Bass Pro Shop. The Residential School had a great time with their friends and family at their Christmas Party! Thank you to the elves at Gulf Distributing Company and to Mr. and Mrs. Ron Cieutat for helping to fill their wish lists. Walk Ons and Christ Café at Christ United Methodist Church donated food for the Christmas feast and St. Dominic’s parish provided their parish hall and wrapped all of the gifts. Thank you to everyone for making our holiday so bright!
Kilborn’s Kids is a program for the children in the Residential School and Woody’s Song School, supported by Vincent Kilborn of Mobile, and the Joseph Treadwell Foundation. Through this program, the children are exposed to educational and enrichment activities outside of the school setting. Camp Grace is one of the annual field trips. The children enjoy fishing, rafting and horse riding. Celisse’s School of Equestrian Arts provides the horse riding. An entire day is spent enjoying the beautiful grounds of Camp Grace. The children are looking forward to other upcoming opportunities that include dance, music and technology.

Fall Fun At The Mobile Campus
Mobile had a fun-filled Fall. The Residential School, Woody’s Song School and Growing Independence Behavioral Services all had Fall Festivals and Spirit Weeks. Some of the activities included Tacky Tourist, Support Your Favorite Team, Crazy Socks, Favorite Hat and Wacky Hair Day. The Little Tree Preschool had a day of celebrating Halloween. All of the children enjoyed being back to school with their friends.
4th Annual Greekfest Charity Gala Raises More Than $107,000 for Local Charities

The 4th Annual Greekfest Charity Gala was held Saturday, Nov. 2nd at Anunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Mobile. The church was transformed to the Greek Isles with extravagant flowers, lighting and music. More than 250 people were in attendance at the black tie affair which raised more than $107,000 for The Learning Tree, Nest of Mobile and Victory Health Partners. Each charity received a check for $35,900 from the proceeds. The Learning Tree is honored and most appreciative to have been selected for the second year. The two-year total gift from this event is nearly $70,000.

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Lori Cart Memorial Scholarship Benefits Children at Little Tree Preschool – Mobile
The Little Tree Preschool is an inclusive educational program serving children with developmental challenges alongside their typically developing peers, ages 2 ½ - 5. On June 21, 2018, the Mobile preschool lost one of their cherished teachers, Lori Cart. The preschool staff have established a scholarship in her memory that will provide tuition assistance to low income children who are registered as peer models. The Lori Cart Memorial Scholarship is now accepting donations. Donations may be made online at www.learning-tree.org/donate/ or mailed to The Learning Tree’s Resource Development office at 205 Lambert Avenue, Suite B, Mobile, AL 36604. Gifts may also be made to honor someone or as an additional memorial of someone. An acknowledgement card will be mailed to notify the recipient. For more information, contact Teresa Atkins, 251-331-2633, tatkins@learning-tree.org.

USA PA Students Support Residential School
The Class of 2020 Physicians Assistants at the University of South Alabama hosted a crawfish boil and silent auction, Craws for a Cause, to raise money for The Learning Tree’s residential school. Each year the students select a philanthropy and host a fundraiser to support that cause. Craws for a Cause raised $9,919 for the children at The Learning Tree’s residential school. The students sold tickets to the crawfish boil, sold t-shirts and had a silent auction. The event was held at O’Daly’s Irish Pub. Coordinator of Educational Services, Desmond Dunklin, brought a couple of the kids to accept the check. Thank you to everyone that made the event such a success!
Thank you to our friends and supporters.
In honor of Wendy Daniel Freeman
Ms. Melinda Daniel

In honor of Rajae Gillespie
Mr. James Kelley

In honor of Taylor Hopkins
Mr. James R. Williams

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Listing reflects donations made through December 31, 2019.
BBVA FOR YOUR CAUSE BENEFIT

BBVA For Your Cause is an affinity program for nonprofit organizations that allows individuals to support The Learning Tree by doing something many of them do every day – use their Debit Card for everyday purchases. When opening a new account with BBVA, ask about the BBVA For Your Cause program and select The Learning Tree’s affinity code, 144777. BBVA will deposit $50 into The Learning Tree’s account. If you have a BBVA Visa Debit Card, contact your local branch and ask to enroll in BBVA For Your Cause. Select The Learning Tree’s affinity code and the bank will deposit royalty payments equal to 0.25% of the amount of each purchase into The Learning Tree account. If you are in the Mobile area, Dakota Gallaspy at the BBVA Skyline Branch will be happy to help you.