



# The Tale Twister

## Cullman Lions Club

May 6, 2019

### Program

Lion Richard Gurley introduced our speaker, tonight, Mr. John Williams, founder of “Life that Counts” program, which was the subject his presentation. This program is a non-profit which came into being just over 3 years ago. Its mission is to help high school students succeed in achieving their goals for life-long happiness. It accomplishes these goals through character education and peer-to-peer based youth mentoring that utilizes best practices in relationships for healthy outcomes.



**1st Vice President Lion Andrew Manning stands with Mr. John Williams & his son after presenting John with a token of appreciation for our program tonight.** Mr. Williams presents himself to be a charismatic, dynamic, and inspiring speaker who could find great success in a church pulpit or as a politician if he so desired. However, he has chosen a more difficult path in trying to really help our youth in a most meaningful way, from the inside-out, and he started this quest practically from ground zero.

In the program’s first year, it operated on a budget of \$53,000. In its second year its

budget was \$103,000 thanks to some added funding from The Office of Justice for Juvenile Delinquency. The third year’s budget was \$213,000 with the help of grant money that also supports a similar program in Indiana with the over-arching program name of “Relentless.” This grant is Federally funded from The Family Youth Service Bureau.

The program works on a peer-to-peer concept in which older student Mentors are first coached & trained by hired staff to lead younger students, focusing on sexual abstinence, as well as best social, emotional, and learning behaviors. Mentors are chosen from upper-class students who are recognized as being leaders & having influence, and who will commit to living & leading by example, the program’s focus ideals. Mentors facilitate topical conversations starting with motivational interviewing style questions, seeking to engage the Mentees in conversations and personal exploration. Changing one behavior occurs in tandem with others. Additionally, role-playing and concrete exercises enhance learning. Ideally, each trained Mentor will have four freshmen students as a team to lead in discussions of relevant focus topics. After the Mentors receive 21-25 hours of training, they, in-turn, lead training with another 25 sessions with their Mentee freshmen students. There are also meeting with just the Mentors, and meeting with all the Mentors and their teams.

In our area of Alabama, the program serves 7 schools with 121 Mentors and



# The Tale Twister

## Cullman Lions Club

366 Mentees; in Indiana, it serves 5 schools, 117 Mentors, and 500 Mentees. Every freshman in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade of participating high schools is served by this program. Since October of 2018, nearly 160,000 hours of healthy student interaction has taken place on 12 campuses in two states. If this program continues to have this type success, there should be no obstacles for it to eventually expand Nation-wide.

John also espoused the need to bring enhanced physical security to all our schools before we worry about “new sports complexes.” We had an inspiring speaker and program, tonight.

### Other Business

Lion Alton Pitzing returned after major health issues, as did Lion Greg Young after a serious automobile accident; also, Lion Greg’s mom and sister continue to recover well from that same accident.

Lion Jerry Bonner talked about the State Convention that was held this past weekend and thanked all those who donated or bought raffle tickets supporting LCIF. Our Club contributed \$600 of the \$1,500 total collected from our District. But the winner of the raffle was not from our Club. He also noted that although Lion Randy Kraft was absent, (maybe because) he was elected Vice-Chairman of the Youth Leadership Committee. Lion Randy will hold this State Lion position for the next two years and will then assume

the role of Chairman of this Committee. Congratulations, Randy!

As a result of Lion Milford Parrish being elected 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice-President, Lion Tim Sinyard had the most votes from the recent Club election for promotion to fill the final year in Lion Milford’s Director position on the Club’s Board of Directors (BOD).

We will have a family picnic at Heritage Park on May 13th.

The Club’s BOD rescinded its decision to hold Club meetings at the All-Steak through the end of June. The Club will have its May 20<sup>th</sup> meeting at the fairgrounds in Exhibit Bldg. #1. The Food Committee will continue to explore alternate venues and advise the BOD.

### Upcoming Programs and Events

May 13: Families Spring Picnic at Heritage Park, at 5:45 PM with meals served, starting around 6:00 PM. Lion Josh Speakman will be catering from the Brandin Iron.

May 20: Meeting back at the fairgrounds; program is TBD.

### Tale Twister Input

If you need something special or to report a correction in the *Tale Twister*, see Lions Carey Thompson or Don Smith at the meetings. Lion Carey can be reached at 256-739-0580 (H) or 256-426-3207 (C). Lion Don can be reached at 256-737-7433 (H) or 256-426-7722 (C)