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UPON FURTHER REVIEW

Many More Miles campaign to donate footwear back for 21st year

BY J. MARK BRYANT

Feb 12, 2025



J. Larry Newton School Clothing Closet:(L-R) Will Wiggins, Director of Operations and Executive Administrator of Baldwin Bone & Joint and Tonya Harrelson, Principal of J. Larry Newton School.

The Many More Miles (MMM) campaign is a community outreach initiative that collects gently used footwear to support local individuals and families in need. Now in its 21st year, organizers say approximately 32,650 pairs of shoes have been donated.

The 2024 drive set a record with more than 5,000 pairs of shoes being turned in. The current campaign, which again is being sponsored by Baldwin Bone & Joint, is taking place through March 12.



MMM 1st Place Winners: (L-R) Principal Tonya Harrelson, Keith Trimew, Peer Helper students, Lee Ann Collins and Loni Burgess of J. Larry Newton School, and Will Wiggins, Director of Operations and Executive Administrator of Baldwin Bone & Joint

Participating Baldwin County schools include Fairhope East Elementary, Fairhope West Elementary, J. Larry Newton Elementary, Rockwell Elementary, Spanish Fort Elementary, Spanish Fort Middle, Bayshore Christian and St. Michael Catholic High School.

Students are rewarded for collecting the highest number of shoes with money for their schools' new physical education equipment. Baldwin Bone & Joint will present cash prizes to physical education programs to the top three Baldwin County schools that donate the most shoes. In addition, the class that brings in the most shoes overall will receive a Chick-fil-A party and the teacher will be awarded a cash prize provided by City Hope Church.



Catherine Spencer's Overall Winning Class: (L-R) Will Wiggins, Director of Operations and Executive Administrator of Baldwin Bone & Joint, Chloe Crosby, students, Catherine Spencer of Foley Elementary and Genna VanVarden of City Hope Church.

Baldwin Bone & Joint's offices in Daphne, Spanish Fort and Foley will serve as primary drop-off locations. Other sites include White-Spinner Realty, McCoy Outdoor Company and the University of South Alabama's Recreation Center. Shoes donated at these sites will benefit a wide range of local organizations, including Empowering People, McKemie

Place, Waterfront Rescue Mission, the Salvation Army, Baldwin County Foster Parents Association, Fostering Together Gulf Coast, Baldwin Family Village, City Hope Homeless Ministry, The Dream Center and local homeless communities.

Additionally, shoes will be distributed to clothing closets in schools across Baldwin County to assist students in need.

HISTORY LESSON

Marsha Anderson works with the Pamela Denham & Associates marketing firm. She supplied Lagniappe with the following information on how this campaign began in 2011:

The event's creator-in-chief, Fairhope's Pam Denham, recalls a humorous anecdote from the early days of the shoe drive. "When we first started, 18 years ago, I forgot to ask donors to tie their shoes together," she said. "We had unmatched shoes all over the place."





Pam Denham, the creator-in-chief of the Many More Miles (MMM).

The inspiration for this footwear for the needy initiative struck Denham over two decades ago while she was living in Tampa, Fla.

“I recall a podiatrist was doing something similar to what we are doing today,” she said. “I also remember seeing in Tampa a huge storeroom, with shoes stacked as high as you could see.”

This experience ignited her belief in the potential for these shoes to find a second life.

After relocating, Denham approached Baldwin Bone & Joint in Daphne, which has been a steadfast partner since the event’s inception.

“They are an important part of MMM,” she remarked about the physicians and staff. “They provide the cash prizes to schools who supply the most shoes. Baldwin Bone & Joint’s employees and patients are also huge suppliers and supporters of our cause. They also set up receiving and distribution points on-site.”

Denham also highlights the generosity of donors who contribute new, unworn shoes.

“One man told me, ‘If I am going to give somebody something, I want it to be the very best,’” Denham said.

More than 90 percent of shoe donations are through the Baldwin County Public School System (BCPSS).

“It’s amazing what something as simple as a pair of shoes can do for someone,” Eddie Tyler, superintendent of BCPSS, said. “Things that many of us take for granted can mean the world to someone else.

“For a child, it may mean they can walk the halls of their school with pride. For adults, it may be a means to help them provide for their family. Shoes are instrumental for everyday life, and we could not think of a better cause to be involved in.”

ADDING SUPPORT

Since 1989, Baldwin Bone & Joint has offered expert orthopedic care to patients of all ages, with all conditions. As fellowship-trained orthopedic surgeons and experienced clinicians, they are recognized leaders in the field of orthopedics, providing the most current treatment available. With 21 licensed medical providers on staff, Baldwin Bone & Joint is the largest privately owned orthopedic specialty practice in Baldwin County.

Office locations include Daphne, Bay Minette, Foley, Fairhope, Spanish Fort and Atmore. Specialized clinics available include The Spine Institute at Baldwin Bone & Joint, The Center for Sports Medicine, The Shoulder Center at Baldwin Bone & Joint and The Osteo Health Clinic.

“Many More Miles is a key community outreach program that makes such a difference in the lives of both children and adults in need,” Will Wiggins, executive administrator for Baldwin Bone & Joint, told Lagniappe.

“Our physicians and staff remain committed to this program and are excited as we partner with City Hope Church and Baldwin County Public Schools to launch [the latest] Many More Miles campaign, giving new life to old shoes.”



A TV station recording the donation table

Baldwin Bone & Joint has also added another community event to its resume, as they help to sponsor the Gulf Coast Paddle & Racket Battle in Daphne. To learn more about the medical practice, call 251-625-2663 or visit baldwinboneandjoint.com.

City Hope is one church with multiple locations, both in Alabama and around the world.

“If there’s one message everyone wants to be a part of, it’s the message of hope. No matter what corner of the Earth we find ourselves in, we aim to bring hope into every life, every home, every city,” according to City Hope staff. “We also believe in the power of family. Our goal is to fight for the absolute best for your family -- financially, spiritually and developmentally.”

To learn more about the church's mission, visit cityhope.cc.

For more information about the Many More Miles campaign, call 251-656-3843 or visit baldwinboneandjoint.com. With two decades of helping local communities, this initiative highlights how a simple act of giving can provide critical support to those in need while keeping usable footwear out of landfills.

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