

# OUR HERITAGE

Tradition, integrity, dedication, and friendship bind the women of SAJF (San Antonio Junior Forum). For 47 years, the members of this nonprofit service organization have raised families, established careers, and maintained successful businesses. Yet, year after year, they continue to find time to volunteer thousands of hours to civic, philanthropic, and educational projects that enrich our city and the lives of its residents.

SAJF, one of ten chapters in Texas, was founded on January 20, 1961, with seventeen original members. The funds raised that year were \$42.50 from selling candy. From this modest beginning, SAJF has grown in strength, numbers, and influence with membership now exceeding 200 women, and financial contributions to our city of over \$1 million.

Committed to serving the needs of our community, SAJF is involved with a number of worthwhile service projects. Through the contribution of volunteer hours and extraordinary fundraising efforts, SAJF continues to have a positive impact on San Antonio, helping many individuals and groups that otherwise would have no support.

Among SAJF's many past accomplishments are:

- ★# The San Antonio Junior Literacy Library, which was established in 1966 in conjunction with the Literacy Council.
- ★# SAJF also established the original grant for Santa Rosa Children's Hospital Cancer Research Center Patient Aid Fund.
- ★# Members have spent countless hours at the Brighton School for Children with Down's syndrome.
- ★# Members have volunteered at the San Antonio Children's Shelter, the Nix Tumor Clinic (now part of Methodist Hospital) and conducted tours of The Alamo.
- ★# From 1975 through 1994, SAJF teamed with the City of San Antonio to provide older citizens with recreational activities, educational classes and nutritious meals at the Commander's House.

Other past service projects have included: San Antonio Festival, Art League Jamboree, Pioneer Cake Fair, Circle T Riding School's Equestrian Therapy Program, KLRN Auction, Fiesta booths, American Cancer Society and Leukemia Society. Members have previously volunteered at The Cancer Therapy and Research Center, Baptist Memorial Hospital Nursing Unit, Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce and the Texas Society to Prevent Blindness. From 1984 until 1993 SAJF and KMOL-TV co-sponsored Call 4, consumer hotline.

In 1985, SAJF started Kids on the Block®, an innovative puppet show that helps children learn about people with physical disabilities and other challenges, and become more accepting and sensitive

to all individuals. About 10,000 school children a year see the show as the puppeteers travel to all area school districts. From 1961 through present, SAJF members have volunteered over 240,000 service hours. And that is only half the story.

Demonstrating exceptional fundraising ability, SAJF has raised over \$1 million and distributed it in our city. These resourceful women have raised funds through Rummage Sales, gala parties of all imaginable themes, luncheon style shows, speaker forums and the sale of SAJF's dynamic cookbook, Celebrate San Antonio. In 1998, because of the great success of Celebrate San Antonio, the membership moved ahead with plans for a new cookbook. Soon after those plans were put into action our Celebrate San Antonio was voted into the Walter S. McIlhenny Hall of Fame and won the Tabasco Award for community cookbooks. Fueled by the recognition, Celebrate San Antonio went into its seventh printing and excitement mounted for the future and for our new cookbook, Clean Your Plate...Dishes for Every Occasion. After securing permission from Spode/Royal Worcester China to use their dishes in our cookbook, we are proud to announce that Clean Your Plate debuted in November of 2001.

In 1993, SAJF purchased the building at 12475 Starcrest. The purpose of the purchase was to use the structure for our business meetings, our cookbook office, and as another avenue for Community Assistance fundraising by leasing out the facilities for special events such as wedding receptions, anniversary, and graduation parties. In April of 2000, a long range planning committee was formed to study the viability of the building now known as Celebration Square. After a yearlong study of our membership and community service options coupled with a remarkable opportunity to maintain our administrative offices at the same location, we sold Celebration Square to a local business, the DRJ Group, Inc. This arrangement allowed us continued use of the space for our business purposes while freeing up service hours that directly benefit our community. The sale of Celebration Square enabled us to establish an endowment whose proceeds will continue to help and support our scholarships and grants program. To date, over \$100,000 in scholarships has been awarded to deserving high school students. In April of 2008, we moved into our current location at 15600 San Pedro, Ste. 105.

Over the years, SAJF has been honored as one of the city's top volunteer organizations. Members continue to study the needs of our community and look for new opportunities to serve. Fresh horizons lie ahead as new members join SAJF and extend their helping hands.