

LIFTING FAMILIES

Together



10

Year
ANNIVERSARY

Gala

A DECADE OF BELIEVING, HOPING, AND HELPING

LIFT

November 15, 2025 at 6pm

JUNIOR LEAGUE OF HOUSTON
1811 BRIAR OAKS LANE - HOUSTON, TX 77027

Greetings from the Founder



LIFTING FAMILIES
Together

I am so honored and blessed to be able to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of Lifting Families Together. This first decade of serving families in the Houston and surrounding communities is indicative of the faithfulness and goodness of God. Many of my family members, friends, and co-workers have so graciously volunteered their time, energy and resources to ensure that LFT is continuously engaged in bringing hope, joy, and love to those who seek our assistance. LFT has been able to partner with many varied organizations, businesses and government agencies throughout the years. The community has been instrumental in supporting its fundraising efforts which allow my nonprofit to remain solvent. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, LFT was able to effectively provide quality assistance and support to families without interruptions.



I know that LFT is a divine assignment that I will diligently seek to maintain its integrity and increase its outreach in all the communities that it serves. Testimonials from clients, smiles upon the faces of children, and a steady stream of old and new volunteers encourages me to move forward with great anticipation. Let's keep touching lives one day at a time.

Love, Ava

LIFTING FAMILIES

Together

ADDRESSES 4 AREAS OF SERVICE:



Counseling/ Case Management Services:

Team will provide a full range of case management and support services to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of children and youth. This team also works with other Community Based Organizations for referral purposes

Focus: Family counseling for parents, siblings, and friends of children with specialized health issues.

Educational Forums:

This Team is responsible for coordinating and planning educational forums on health care issues for patients and families of children with health concerns. This team is also responsible for educational and community health fairs.

Focus: Address the specific health issue involved, including care and safety issues of the child with special health issues.

Financial Services:

This Team addresses issues and sets guidelines relating to "family support services". This team also works as the primary body within the non-profit organization that raises funds for its various activities. Has a very important role in the non-profit since it leads the board members in all fund raising activities and is also instrumental in drawing up a fund raising plan for the non-profit organization.

Focus: Financial support for families with household bills, such as mortgage, utilities, car notes, and specialized transportation for kids with health issues.

Life Skills:

The Life Skills Team is responsible for planning modules and programs that will facilitate, model and build skills that will lead to optimal independence for children and families with health care issues

Focus: Healthy Meal Preparation and planning, Personal Care, plan and coordinate recreational activities and community outings.

How can you get involved? Glad you asked:

- *Become a LFT Sponsor – Commit to an annual financial pledge*
- *Host a LFT fundraiser online or in your community*
- *Participate and/or Serve on our Events Team- Annual Walkathon, Christmas Giveback, Gala, etc.*
- *Volunteer - Serve on one of our subcommittees using your area of expertise*
- *Referral Service- Provide organization contacts that can partner with us*



AVA HOLLAND
President/Founder

www.LiftingFamiliesTogether.org
832-947-3018

Gala Committee Members

Crystal Chambers ~ Chair
Board Advisor: Verna McKentie

Registration

Rosalyn Thomas - Lead

Sharon Green Altra Holloman
Annette Lenton Deborah Oliver
Juanita Wright

Finance

Denise Adams - Lead

Myosha Faultry Lisa Trammel
Pedro Tavarez

Host/Hostess

Lolita Westbrook - Lead

Chris White Cicely McKentie
Tommy Johnson Shirley Baham
Fariiece Joiner Alice Booker
J'Naudia Phillips Carol Taplin
Ronnell Tresvant Barbara Beatty
Elizabeth Barnes Rylan Holloman
BJ Holloman

Raffle / Silent Auction

Lois Davis - Lead

Marilyn Lee
Marilyn McClinton

Decorations

Laura Thompson Mason Cillelland

Souvenir Program/Tributes/Ads

Monica Martin Lead

Nadene Dukes Ava Holland
Ethel Moore Pedro Tavarez

Featured Artist

LIFTING FAMILIES TOGETHER - MUSICAL CREATIVE DIRECTOR

JAMIE SIMOND

SINGER-RECORDING ARTIST-MINISTER-SONGWRITER-PRODUCER-PODCAST HOST
DIRECTOR OF WORSHIP ARTS @HOLMAN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

His professional career began under the direction of Walt Whitman as a member of the Soul Children of Chicago in 1987. "Use Me", a Soul Children classic led by young Jamie, was often played on the radio then and more so now than ever. The Founder, Walt Whitman, is and has been one of Jamie's biggest musical influences. Soul Children of Chicago not only helped train and groom Jamie's musical talents, it also allowed him to travel the world and perform with a plethora of great artists of all musical genres. He's recorded with legendary artists such as Gladys Knight, Jessy Dixon, Dorinda Clark Cole and Pastor Marvin Winans just to name a few.

He accepted his call into ministry in 1994, was licensed as a minister in 1995, and ordained in 1997.

In 1998, he joined the male group NuWave, wrote several songs, and recorded their Stellar Award nominated album, "So Grateful To You". Then in 2004, they changed their name to Fortitude, and recorded their second self titled release on the Warner Brothers/Word label group.

In 1999, he became the worship leader to the Salem Baptist Church of Chicago, where he led and served also as Director of Worship in the youth and children's ministries, in their 10,000 seat sanctuary that is affectionately called The House Of Hope. He served there for 13 years until transitioning in 2012 to the The Lilydale Progressive Baptist Church, affectionately called The Progression Church, where he served for 11 years. Also in that year, he released his first award winning solo album entitled "Collage".

In 2023, Jamie became the director of Worship Arts at the Holman Street Baptist Church in Houston Texas, and is embarking on his next season of ministry.



Luminary Award Recipients



Jeffrey L. Boney

There is so much I can say about Ms. Ava Holland and the Lifting Families Together (LFT) organization, but the one word that I believe best describes the work of Lifting Families Together is: IMPACT.

Since inception, Lifting Families Together has made a tremendous IMPACT on the Greater Houston area. As a Missouri City Councilmember, I was blessed to partner with Lifting Families Together to provide hot meals for over 180 seniors affected by Hurricane Beryl in my district.

It truly blesses my heart to know that an article I wrote inspired Ms. Ava Holland to create an organization that has made, and continues to make, a major IMPACT on the lives of so many people and our community.

God Bless Ms. Ava Holland and the Lifting Families Together organization. I'm looking forward to even greater opportunities to serve our community together.

Jeffrey L. Boney

Sherel Hatcher Harris

When I first heard about Lifting Families Together, I wanted to be a part of the mission and I have been hanging in there ever since. Helping others is what I like to do. I love being a part of this organization and being able to help kids and their families. Lifting Families Together's mission is to Lift Families when they need it most.

Sherel Harris



HOPE HERE

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WORSHIP

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10
Year
ANNIVERSARY

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"Where The Family Comes First"

Congratulates

AVA HOLLAND & LIFTING FAMILIES TOGETHER

on

A DECADE OF BELIEVING, HOPING, AND HELPING

Our staff is committed to giving you genuine compassion, understanding and sincere warmth when it is most needed as you prepare the final arrangements for your loved one.

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- Quality Service and Professionalism
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CONTACT
Jevon Brown

 (832) 433-5562

 J5Music@protonmail.com



CONGRATULATIONS

Lifting Families Together

We Support Your Goals & Vision



Positive Perspective Mentors & Educational Services

www.ppmes.org

"ACHIEVING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES BY MENTORING, EDUCATING AND STRENGTHENING AT-RISK YOUTH, INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES"

ADULT SERVICES INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

Pre-Marital Education · Marriage Enrichment · Family Bonding
Relationship Skill Building · Conflict Resolution · Couples Mentoring

YOUTH MENTOR SERVICES INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

Life & Social Skills Development * Community Service Opportunities * Conflict Resolution
Higher Education & Career Plan Development Assistance * Scholarship Research
Self-Efficacy Guidance & Leadership Training * Negotiation Skill Development



Willie A. Taylor 832-689-4594
wt@ppmes.org

Dr. Michele Taylor 281-851-6598
michelegettertaylor@gmail.com

Congratulations LFT on a Decade of Believing, Hoping and Helping



The Stewarts

Roger Sr., Carla, RaShaandra, RaKisha, Roger Jr., Jasmine, Jessica, Arian, A'rianna
Daddy, You are in our most beautiful memories!



Congratulations

*Lifting Families Together
on ten years of serving the community!*

SMILES OF MIDTOWN
EVERYTHING FOR EVERY SMILE



Location

3600 San Jacinto St,
Houston, TX 77004



Office Hours

MON	8:00 am - 3:00 pm
TUE	10:00 am - 5:00 pm
WED	8:00 am - 3:00 pm
THU	7:00 am - 2:00 pm
FRI - SUN	Closed



Get in Touch

Brian G. Martinez, DDS
Ph: 713.523.6848
Cell: 713.502.3454
www.smilesofmidtown.com

Family and Cosmetic Dentistry



2025 LFT *Gala Menu*

Salad/Soup

Mixed Green Salad with Sundried Tomatoes, House-Made Croutons, Jack Cheese, etc.

Creamy Tomato Bisque

Entrée

Chicken Madeira with Cremini Mushrooms

Truffle Butter Mashed Potatoes

Julienne Carrots, Leeks and Zucchini

Orange Rolls and Dinner Rolls

Dessert

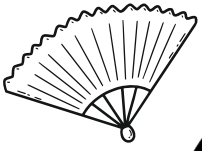
Pecan Ball

Beverage

Tea, Water & Coffee

Lifting Families Together Program 2025

Introduction of Gala Committee and Master of Ceremony	Gala Chair Crystal Chambers
Master of Ceremony	Chilly Bill Smith Morning Show Host on KTSU 90.9FM
Welcome and Occasion	Ed and Danita Price
Invocation and Blessing of Food	Pastor Murray G. Martin Holman Street Baptist Church, Houston TX
Memoriam Proclamation	State Representative Ron Reynolds
In Memoriam and Dedication	Josh Thompson
Music Selection	Jamie Simond Award Winning Recording Artist, Singer/Songwriter, Producer
Dinner and Music	Junior League Banquet Staff J5 Music Group
Announcements	Chilly Bill Smith
Family Spotlight	Verna McKentie <i>Maria Rodriguez and Jose</i> <i>Michelle White and Angel Elaine</i>
LFT Luminary Award	Missouri City Councilmember Jeffrey Boney Sherel Harris
Giving Campaign	Chilly Bill Smith
Special Music Selection	Jamie Simond
Believer Award and Words from the Founder	Ava Holland
Raffle and Silent Auction Results	
Closing Prayer	Pastor Matthew A. Davis New Beginnings Church, Houston, TX



Melanated MIDLIFE

Treating midlife like less of a crisis,
and more like an upgrade.

Dr. Akilah Willery
Founder



What if this season is not about holding on, but about upgrading everything, from your career, to your home, and your identity, but on purpose. Welcome to *Melanated Midlife*, where we help you redesign what comes next with strategy, clarity, and zero apologies.



The Podcast

- Real conversations. Real liberation. Real women redesigning what life looks like next.
- Unfiltered perspectives on pivots, purpose, and permission
- Watch on YouTube

The Redesign Lab

- A high-touch, guided coaching experience for women 50+ who are ready to restructure their careers, homes, and identities with intention
- Selective enrollment now open at melanatedmidlife.com/redesign

MelanatedMidlife.com





Get the Book!

Available at:

amazon

**BARNES
& NOBLE**

**You're Not Starting Over.
You're Starting Now.**

For the ambitious, accomplished person who's done everything "right" but feels the quiet tug of reinvention, this book is your permission slip. *Melanated Midlife* is a bold, honest, and empowering guide for professionals of color over 50 who are ready to pivot, professionally, emotionally, spiritually, and even geographically.

Through deeply personal stories, client journeys, and research-backed insight, Dr. Akilah Willery unpacks the truth about midlife transitions: the career changes, the identity shifts, the empty nests, and the full hearts. She challenges outdated norms, calls out the myths of "too late," and invites you to design a life that fits who you are now, not who you had to be before.

Whether you're downsizing your home, dusting off forgotten dreams, or finally putting yourself at the top of your own to-do list, this book will walk beside you like a trusted girlfriend, coach, and guide.

ASHLEY JADINE FOUNDATION

RAISING AWARENESS TO PREVENT SUICIDE THROUGH HOPE AND HEALING



AJF is a 501c(3) public charity founded in 2012, in memory of Ashley Jadine Duncan. Ashley was 17 years old, a high school senior at the time of her death by suicide. Our organization seeks to empower teens and young adults to get help and prevent suicides.



TALK MORE.
TEXT LESS.
THERE IS HOPE!



“ONE WING” SCHOLARSHIP

In memory of Ashley, AJF gives a one-time scholarship to assist a graduating senior with educational expenses at a place of higher education institution.

AJF Annual Health Fair and 5K Walk
September, National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month



FOR MORE INFORMATION, TO PARTNER WITH US,
OR TO MAKE A DONATION:
PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE OR FACEBOOK PAGE

 / ASHLEY JADINE FOUNDATION
WWW.ASHLEYJADINE.ORG





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BAY CITY BLACK CATS CLASS OF 1974

CONGRATULATIONS, LIFTING FAMILIES TOGETHER!

The Bay City High School Class of 1974 salutes you on ten years of service to children and families facing health challenges. Through counseling, financial support, education, and compassionate care, you lift hearts and ease burdens. Here's to another decade of impact and hope!

BAY CITY BLACK CATS, CLASS OF 1974



Congratulations
LIFTING FAMILIES TOGETHER 2025 ANNUAL GALA



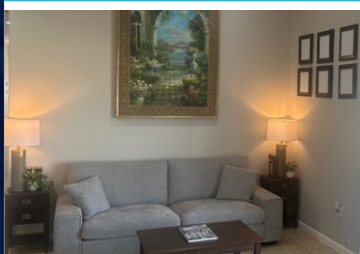
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FELLOWSHIP CENTER (80 SEATS)



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- Funeral Service with Cremation
- Viewing with Memorial Service and Cremation
- Memorial Service with Burial
- Traditional Funeral Service
- Graveside Service
- Receptions

Our Facility:

- 3 Beautiful Buildings on an almost 2-acre campus
- Southern Hospitality with Colorful Azaleas surrounding each building
- 7 Viewing Rooms
- Wrap-around porch
- Separate Reception Hall
- Separate Chapel for larger services and cremation ceremonies
- Coffee Bar and Flower Shops inside

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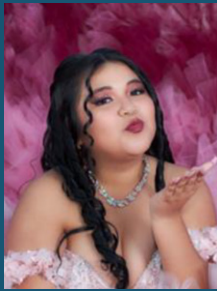




Tyrone Bowles



Harriette Bryant



Daniela Castillo



Patricia Davis



Sammie Lee Davis



Ernestine Dixon



Faedra Early



Ruth Evans



Edgar Gamble II



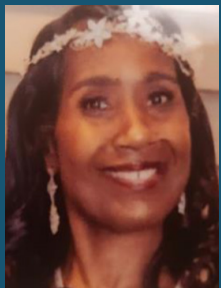
Yvonne Gentry



Alecia Glenn



Sammie Gordon



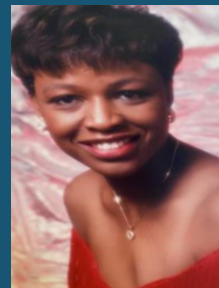
Veronica Hart



Vivian Thomas



Roylene Kelly



Lisa Kiser-Cook



Reverend
Manson B. Johnson II



Herbert Marion



Elaine Miller



Loyce Miller



Tommy Portley



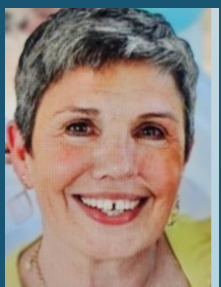
Elvis Presley



Alberta Robinson



Anita Scott



Sheila Sharemet



Reverend
Charles Spriggs



Noah Stacy



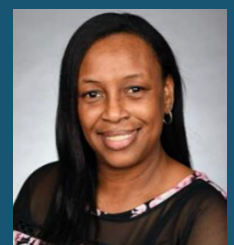
Nolon Stewart



Roger Stewart



Michael Sturm



Tanique Taylor Evans

LIFTING FAMILIES TOGETHER MEMORIAM

Forever in our hearts, never forgotten.





*In Memory of
Our Beloved*

REVEREND CHARLES RAY SPRIGGS



*You will always be remembered in our hearts.
We are forever grateful for the love and support you were so freely
willing to give.*





Family

IN MEMORY OF

NOLON STEWART
SAMMIE GORDON
and
RUTH EVANS

We are reminded of your dedication to our family
and all of the love and support you gave over the years.
We cherish the opportunity to continue your legacy of helping others.

Sponsors and Supporters

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COMMUNITY HEALTH CHOICE
HIGHBURY CONSULTING

LFT TABLE SPONSORS

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JAMES AND ETHEL MOORE
DEBORAH OLIVER
PATRICIA SMITH
RONNELL TRESVANT
ROSALYN THOMAS
MICHAEL AND WANDA STURM

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CRYSTAL CHAMBERS	MAURICE WATKINS
JOHN SHAREMET	TARGET
JOSH AND LAURA THOMPSON	IRIS PRESLEY
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DAMIAN TOVAR	SHERYL JEFFERSON-VICTORIAN
ANNIE SESSION	TERRANCE SMALL
LISA TRAMMEL	RITA JAMAR
GLORIA BURTON	MR. AND MRS. FRED BOEPPLE
CHARLOTTE BOYKINS	RTIC
GARY AND VANESSA ANDERSON	ERICA BARNES
DEBORAH STEWART	



LIFTING FAMILIES
Together

16,000+

Total Lives touch since 2015

*Mission of
Lifting Families Together (LFT)*

*To improve the quality of life for
children with health care issues.*

3,200+

Total Lives touched annually

*We provide four services to the
families in the Houston Metropolitan
counties (Harris, Fort Bend, and
Brazoria). Services include Case
Management/Counseling; Life Skills;
Educational; and Financial*

We're Touching Lives

LFT Community Activities

Provide personal Services to Families after meeting eligibility requirements through an application screening process. Services are provided on a case by case basis.

Annual LFT Walkathon & Community Health Fair

LFT Provides Weekly Snack Weekends, Quarterly Families arts/Crafts/Lunch/chair massages to Texas Children's Hospital West Campus

Annual Holiday Event (toys, gift cards, Lunch) for community families in need

LFT Support of Community Events

Access Health Community Operation Back-to-School Health Fair

Missouri City Fire and Rescue Open Houses
Civic Heart Health Day

Sickle Cell Association of Texas Marc Thomas Foundation Camp Cell-A-Bration

Ashley Jadine Foundation Events

Holman Street Community Festival

Olive Branch Back to School Events

Financial Ways to Donate

Gift/Debit Cards (Utilities, Gas, Grocery)

Mortgage and Rental Payment

Family Counseling

Hospital Visits to provide Parents break

Sponsored Day Out (Main Events/Rodeo/Lunch)



Top Partnerships & Supporters

Access Health Community Health Centers
Children's Memorial Hermann Ronald McDonald House
Texas Children's Hospital (Medical Center and West Campus)
Missouri City Fire & Rescue Services
New Opportunities Abound Here (NOAH)

The Dash

I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend, He referred to the dates on the tombstone from the beginning...to the end.

He noted that first came the date of birth and spoke the following date with tears, but he said what mattered most of all was the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time that they spent alive on earth. And now only those who loved them know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not, how much we own, the cars...the house...the cash. What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.

So, think about this long and hard. Are there things you'd like to change? For you never know how much time is left that can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough to consider what's true and real and always try to understand the way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger and show appreciation more and love the people in our lives like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect and more often wear a smile, remembering this special dash might only last a little while

So, when your eulogy is being read with your life's actions to rehash... Would you be proud of the things they say about how you spent YOUR dash?

~Linda Ellis

