

Profile photo/Britney Porter



Alma Zadow celebrated her 79th birthday by receiving the Assistance League's Ada Edwards Laughlin Award.

The Assistance League® is a national, nonprofit organization with more than 117 chapters and guilds nationwide. The group was started in the 1890s as a volunteer organization, and the Collin County chapter was founded in May 1996. The Collin County chapter is involved with literacy programs in schools, craft programs in community homes for the elderly, and programs in hospitals that help the sick and the bereaved. In addition, every chapter in the United States participates in a program called Operation School Bell®, which provides clothing for needy children.

"If children have decent clothing, they are more apt to attend school on a regular basis," said Faye Crupi, Assistance League

Alma Zadow

of Greater Collin County President. "This program takes a high percentage of our funds and our volunteer hours."

The Assistance League of Greater Collin County employs no paid staff. Yet last year alone, the group volunteered more than 9,800 hours in the local community.

Periodically, chapters of the Assistance League select one member to receive the Ada Edwards Laughlin Award, named for the co-founder of the National Assistance League®. "This award is for a person that is dedicated to our organization, but does her work more behind-the-scenes, never holding elected office, but always supporting the activities of the Assistance League." Crupi explained.

The group's most recent recipient of this award is Alma Zadow, a charter member of the Collin County group and extremely involved Assistance League member. Zadow was presented with the award at the group's October 17, 2007 meeting, where the group also celebrated Zadow's 79th birthday.

"The award was such a surprise," Zadow said. "There are so many people who could have received it instead of me."

Although she's never held an officer position in the group, Crupi said that Zadow has exemplified the spirit of volunteerism in her work with the group. "Alma has been a member since the Assistance League was chartered in 1996. She has been one of those behind-the-scenes kinds of volunteers, always there to help in so many ways."

Zadow grew up in a large family on a farm in Sidney, Montana. Teamwork was a way of life for Zadow's family: cooking, cleaning, laundry, and bringing in the crops were all accomplished by Zadow and her five brothers and seven sisters.

"The team concept is one of the reasons Alma chose to join the Assistance League," said Assistance League of Greater Collin County Public Relations Chairman and Zadow's friend Jody Riley. "She sees this group as a membership of sisters, a team, a group dedicated to act as a friend at all times to all men. To me, Alma epitomizes the quiet, gentle woman. She is soft-spoken, but quick to smile and laugh, and she is very focused on living her life by giving back to society's needs."

“It’s very rewarding and very exciting to belong to a group like this that works together so well as a team.”

Zadow is involved in the group’s Operation School Bell program, which provides clothing to needy school-age children; Pass the Word program, which provides reading material for hospital patients; and Making It Happen program, which periodically provides craft projects and refreshments at area assisted living facilities. Zadow spends at least 10 hours per month volunteering with the group.

“Alma is a member who exemplifies the highest standard of volunteerism,” added Assistance League of Greater Collin County Past-President Martha Smith, who presented Zadow with the award. “She has no personal agenda, no need or desire for recognition, and simply wants to serve the citizens of Collin County. She has done so since the inception of this chapter of Assistance League and, along the way, has demonstrated professionalism and joy in serving. Simply put, she is a jewel whom everyone likes, respects and admires.



From left: Alma’s husband Dale Zadow and her sons Doug and Lynn.

“Alma has the energy and determination to accomplish more than those half her age,” Smith added. “I have worked with her on most every project of the Assistance League and have found her sense of humor delightful and calming. Alma can put the picture in perspective by looking at the issues, culling the

irrelevant, and acting on the important.”

Zadow and her husband, Dale, have two sons and five grandchildren. After more than 20 relocations around the country due to Dale’s job, they settled in Richardson. Upon retirement, Zadow sought volunteer opportunities to fill her days. “It is so rewarding to know that you are giving back and making a difference in the lives of needy children and the elderly and the sick,” Zadow said. “It’s very rewarding and very exciting to belong to a group like this that works together so well as a team.”

In addition to working with Assistance League, Zadow enjoys playing bridge, baking, watching sports, getting together with family, volunteering with her church’s Braille ministry, and is passionate about the importance of giving back to the community. “I feel like anybody that has time at all would find this group so interesting and likeable,” Zadow said. “We all work together wonderfully. I encourage everyone to become involved. If you want to make a difference and explore your talents, come see what we do!”

... about the League

- Meetings are at 10 a.m. the third Wednesday of the month, except June and July, at Stonebriar County Club in Frisco.
- New member dues are \$80 per year (prorated if joining late in the year); regular dues are \$65. Membership votes on all other financial obligations.
- New members must attend an informational event and orientation.
- There are no required hours of service. It is assumed that all who join do so in order to serve in the community.
- Each member must serve on one of the following committees: Membership, Education, Philanthropy, Budget and Finance, Resource Development, Strategic Planning, Newsletter, Bylaws, Hospitality, Grants, or Public Relations.
- Each member must work on philanthropic projects of her choice and assist on all fundraising projects.

Interested in joining the Collin County Chapter? Contact Carol Marsh, Vice President of Membership, at 972-473-2287, e-mail her at clam10@tx.rr.com, or visit www.assistanceleague-gcc.org.

... about the programs

Operation School Bell*

This program supports underprivileged elementary school children, increasing their self-esteem and making school attendance possible by providing clothes and hygiene kits.

Read Aloud Program

Assistance League members provide weekly reading assistance to students and fund a motivational library at select schools.

Assault Survivor Kits*

Victims of assault and accident at Presbyterian Hospitals of Plano, Allen, and Baylor Regional Medical Center of Plano receive clothing after leaving the emergency care facility.

Making It Happen

Craft projects and refreshments are provided to seniors at two Plano government-assisted retirement homes.

Wee Memories

Bereavement memory boxes are distributed to parents whose babies died at or shortly after birth.

Pass The Word

This project entails staffing and operating a magazine and game cart at Presbyterian Hospital of Plano.

Bright Ideas

Assistance League members provide tutoring to children at the after-school “Homework Club” two afternoons a week at Frisco’s Bright Elementary School.