

PROUDLY SUPPORTING TEXAS A&M STUDENTS AND EACH OTHER

# KATY AGGIE MOMS' CLUB



Written by Cathy Sze

After settling students back into school, the Aggie Moms gathered for dinner

Tondi Branch purchases goodies for student care packages



**T**hey wear maroon and proudly participate in many Aggie yells, shouting the infamous “Howdy!” and other Aggie chants. These spirited mothers are members of the Katy/West Houston Aggie Moms’ Club, a non-profit organization under the Federation of Texas A&M University Mothers’ Club. From making care packages for their Aggie children, to making blankets to donate to Christus St. Catherine’s Children’s Ward, these Katy area moms know what it means to carry true maroon pride.

## KEEPING THE SPIRIT

Traditions are a vital part to keeping any school’s spirit alive, and without a doubt, Texas A&M University carries theirs with enthusiasm and pride. From the welcoming “Howdy!” to a farewell “Gig ‘Em!,” outgoing President of the Katy/West Houston Aggie Moms’ Club, Sonna Lumpkins, has always appreciated A&M’s traditions. “In dating my husband who went to A&M many, many years ago, I developed a huge love for all of their wonderful traditions,” says Lumpkins.

The Aggie Moms’ Club sees it as their duty to make sure these traditions are heard. Kay Pontious, this past year’s Publicity Chairperson and fourth generation Aggie mother, is a third generation Aggie. Pontious says that at every Aggie Moms’ Club meeting mothers are educated on one tradition. “We tell them about how the tradition evolved,” says Pontious. “This year we brought the Tradition Council, which is some Aggie students, and they did a really entertaining presentation of the different traditions, what they mean, and they acted them out. It was a real favorite meeting for the moms.”



## MORE THAN A LASTING TRADITION

Besides introducing Aggie mothers to A&M traditions, the Aggie Moms' Club also lends financial support. "We try to do things with the kids, for the kids, and for the university," says Pontious. "One of our main goals is to raise scholarship money. We have endowed scholarships that we give to the university, and every year we make donations to five student organizations. We also give away four scholarships to current Aggies."

Those scholarships are the main reason that Lumpkins joined the organization. Her son graduated from A&M in 2007, and after seeing the impact of the organization she decided to get involved. "I thought raising scholarship funds was very worthwhile," says Lumpkins. "We sell items, have fundraising events throughout the year and have special events to raise the money."

## REAPING THE BENEFITS

After your child graduates high school and heads off to college, it can be hard staying in constant contact with each other, but Pontious says that the Aggie Moms' Club has allowed the process to be much easier. "It keeps us more in touch," says Pontious of communicating with daughter who will graduate in 2011 and her son who graduated in 2007. "Not that you need a reason to go visit your kids in college, but by things that we do like making care packages and attending the tailgate in the fall, it gives us a reason to go see them."

Lumpkins also explains other valuable aspects to the Aggie Moms' Club. "You learn so many things about what your children are going through and learn about other organizations that your child has joined," says Lumpkins. "I think the aggie moms really get a lot out of it. We have a lot of social activities, too." From bowling to playing Bunco, the Aggie mothers enjoy getting to know each other. "We try to include the husbands in some things, but we also have a ladies night out," says Pontious.

## HOWDY! YEAR ROUND

These Aggie moms have a thriving calendar of events they participate in throughout the year. Every spring the Aggie Moms' Club



participates in "Big Event", the largest one-day, student-run service project in the nation where students of A&M come together to thank the residents of Bryan and College Station by completing jobs and volunteering. "Us mothers had our own 'Big Event' project," says Lumpkins. "Our group honored the tradition by making blankets to donate to Christus St. Catherine Hospital."

Despite its name, Pontious says the Aggie Moms' Big Event project is not as big as the Howdy Social in June. "We welcome the incoming freshmen and transfer students, honor our graduates, distribute our scholarships and announce our winners," says Pontious. "We invite the families and parents, and it's a great way to build enthusiasm with the young kids who are going to A&M. The yell leaders come and some of the graduates speak of what they were involved in to inspire the younger ones to get involved."

The fall is also full of activities, including a blood drive competition between Texas A&M and the University of Texas, Parent's Weekend, and the Aggie Moms' Camp at College Station in November. "It's wonderful to go to," says Lumpkins. "About 200 moms come from all over Texas and even further to learn all about A&M and get shown around the school."



Aggie Moms participated in the Big Event by donating blankets to Christus St. Catherine



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### NO GRUDGES

Wondering what it takes to become a member? “We have an open policy where anyone can join,” says Lumpkins. “Generally they’re moms who have or had children that attend A&M.” And surprisingly enough, you won’t get turned down even if you are from the longtime enemy school! Lumpkins is a University of Texas alum and clearly she’s no rival. “We have so many converted moms,” says Pontious. “It’s just a really nice place to make new friends that you share something in common with no matter where you attended.”

### NOT YOUR TYPICAL MEETING

Long agendas with numerous announcements and boring protocol are typically what spring to mind when the word “meeting” is heard. But quite the opposite is the case for the Aggie Moms’ club. With annual dues of \$20, these Aggie moms enjoy their meeting at Living Word Lutheran Church at the corner of Mason Road and Westheimer Parkway at 7 p.m. on the first Thursday of every month. “We like the meetings to be fun and not very serious,” says Pontious. “We have some ladies who have some great mixers and games and all sorts of things we play.” Interesting key speakers also come to talk, and refreshments are always a plus.

### A NEW YEAR

Publicity Chairperson for the past three years, Pontious feels honored to be elected to serve as President of the Katy/West Houston Aggie Moms’ club this school year with Lumpkins by her side as Vice President at Large. “As a third generation raising a houseful of fourth generation Aggies, I know that at A&M there is so much more than education, but it’s also about the values like hard work and integrity that are learned outside of the classroom,” says Pontious. “I really believe that it’s that set of conservative values that will influence our kids for the rest of our lives, and I think that’s important for our parents to know because a lot of our Aggie moms did not go to A&M. I really am looking forward to the opportunity to enable the moms to learn more about traditions and activities that make Texas A&M a special place.” KM

*CATHY SZE has been writing for Katy Magazine since she was a student at Cinco Ranch High School. Currently a sophomore majoring in journalism at UT Austin, she has fun participating in the A&M/UT rivalry with her Aggie friends.*



Each November the moms and their students gather for the Aggie Mom Camp Banquet

ARE YOU THE MOM OF AN AGGIE?

For info about upcoming events or joining the group, visit [katywesthoustonaggie moms.com](http://katywesthoustonaggie moms.com)