

Welcome to the Heritage Belle Program of Washington County! You are a part of a wonderful group of young ladies who have the unique opportunity to learn and to teach others about the history and heritage of Brenham and Washington County.

### **Requirements for Membership**

The Heritage Belle Program is an adjunct to the Heritage Society of Washington County and was organized in 1993. The invitation to membership is extended to all high school girls in Washington County, Texas, in an effort to promote knowledge and appreciation of history and heritage. Some of the activities include joint participation with the Belle's parent or guardian, with the goal being to provide fun and beneficial experiences to both.

Membership in the Heritage Belles provides opportunities for community service and for education. Serving as docents, Belles will host local visitors to the Giddings Stone Mansion and the Giddings Wilkin House Museum as well as other homes of historical or architectural significance during the holiday tours and other special events. Participation in the Society events brings a unique perspective and knowledge of the history of the local area. It also introduces young women to the beautiful properties that are so much of a part of the rich heritage of Washington County.

Membership in the Heritage Belle Program should be viewed as both a privilege and a responsibility. The Belles perform service activities and practice conducting themselves with grace and dignity. As high school seniors, Belles are presented to the Heritage Society members and guests as young women who have met the highest standards of membership and citizenship and who have earned, through service, the right to be recognized.

### **Belle Program Organization**

The Belle Program is under the leadership and supervision of one or more Belle Coordinators who, as board members, report to the Board of the Heritage Society. The Belles are divided by grade level. The Belle President and Vice President along with the Belle Coordinators will assist in the communication about events. The parents and/or guardians of the Belles take turns serving as chaperones with the Belles and will be asked to assist with other activities, including the annual Gala.

### **Heritage Belle Executive Board**

The officers of the Heritage Belle program are the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Events/Media Chairman. These offices shall constitute the Executive Board of the organization. All officers are required to be active members in good standing of the Belle Program.

The goal of the officer component is to provide interested Belles leadership opportunities and allow them to be an integral part of expanding our service organization. This will give much needed support to the Heritage Society.

Elections for the upcoming school year are usually held in April. The officers-elect begin to serve in April to become familiar with the administration of the program.

### **Membership and Dues**

The Belle Program year begins in August/September and runs for a twelve (12) month period, though activities are rarely scheduled in June or July.

- Membership dues for all Belles are \$115.00 (\$50.00 per family for a Heritage Society of Washington County membership, \$25.00 for Belle dues, \$15.00 for the current Belle t-shirt and \$25.00 for Gala class donation). Additional siblings in the same family are \$65.00 (only one membership fee per family). Dues need to be paid in full on or before October 31, 2022

Dues can be mailed to:

HSOWC

P.O. Box 1123

Brenham, Texas 77834-1123

Participation in any Belle Program event or activity is not allowed until dues are fully paid. Dues are non-refundable.

### **Belle Conduct**

Each Belle is a reflection of the Heritage Society and, as such, she is expected to behave in a responsible manner, specifically and without limitation, each Belle must:

- Demonstrate kindness, courtesy and respect even when others do not;
- Obey all rules of the Heritage Society and the Belle Program;
- Respect the property and the rights of the Heritage Society, its members and guests;
- Cooperate with and assist the Society in maintaining safety, order and discipline;
- Comply with directives given by the Belle Coordinators and Chaperones;
- Be mindful that she represents the Heritage Society at all times including participation in social media.

A Belle may be suspended or terminated from the Belle Program for any of the following, including but not limited to:

- Using profanity or vulgar language;
- Making obscene gestures;
- Engaging in bullying, cyberbullying, harassment or abusive language or conduct
- Causing a substantial disruption to Society events or activities;
- Defacing Society property or using it in a manner other than as directed by the Belle Coordinator(s) or Society personnel;
- Committing any act or omission in violation of law.

The Heritage Society Board has the final say in all concerns relating to individual Belles or the Belle Program.

**Alcohol / Drug / Tobacco:** The Heritage Belle Program is a zero-tolerance organization.

- Any Belle, who possesses, consumes alcohol and/or is under the influence of alcohol while attending a Belle related event, representing the Heritage Belle Program / Heritage Society or while on Heritage Society owned property, will be expelled from the Belle Program.
- Any Belle who uses or is in possession of a prescription drug not prescribed to her; ingest, intravenous, inhaled and/or smokes any controlled substance or illegal drug, and/or under the influence of a drug while attending a Belle related event, representing the Heritage Belle Program / Heritage Society or while on Heritage Society owned property, will be expelled from the Belle Program.
- Any Belle who uses or possesses tobacco / nicotine / e-liquid / products; any other device that stimulates smoking by using a mechanical heating element, battery or electronic circuit, to deliver nicotine or other substances to the individual inhaling the device, while attending a Belle related event, representing the Heritage Belle Program / Heritage Society or while on Heritage Society owned property, will be expelled from the Belle Program. The term includes any device that is manufactured, distributed or sold as an e-cigarette, e-cigar, e-pipe, vaporizers, and Juul or under another product name or description and component, part or necessary for the device, regardless of whether the component, part or accessory is sold separately from the device.

**Social Media:** All Belles should be aware of anything posted on social media that reflects negatively on themselves, the Belle Program or the Heritage Society of Washington County. If any behavior regarding social media is deemed inappropriate by a Belle Coordinator, or Heritage Society Board member, the Belle may be terminated from the program.

**Belles may not use or display cell phones or other electronic devices during Society events or activities,** unless with the express permission of the Belle Coordinator(s). Such devices may be confiscated by the Belle coordinator(s), chaperone or Heritage Society Board member until the end of the Society event. A Belle's refusal to comply with a request by a Belle Coordinator(s), chaperone or Heritage Society Board member to relinquish the device

may result in additional disciplinary measures, up to and including the Belle's termination from the program.

### **Belle Attire**

Belles are expected to practice good hygiene and grooming and to dress in attire appropriate for the occasion. Belles are not permitted to chew gum, wear flip flops or clothing that exposes cleavage, midriff or bra straps. Hair must be worn in a style reflecting the historic time period and must NOT contain un-natural hair colors with a style that will not obscure the face, or interfere with the Belle's ability to perform assigned tasks.

**Historic Dress:** Each Belle will provide and wear an appropriate historic dress when serving as a docent or representative of the Heritage Society. Please remember the historic dress should not portray a saloon style and should reflect dresses from the 1840's to the 1870's. Previous Belle photographs are located on our website at [www.giddingsstonemansion.com](http://www.giddingsstonemansion.com) under the Heritage Belles tab, which gives appropriate ideas. Please ask a Belle Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns about the historic dress.

**Serving Attire:** When serving food or beverages for a Society Event, Belles will be required to wear:

- Black pants (they may not be distressed or have rips or holes)
- A dressy casual white shirt. (Shirt must be tucked in or be hip length and MUST cover the waistband of the pants when arms are raised. It cannot be a t-shirt, ripped or see through.)
- Solid black, closed toed shoes. (Crocs and flip flop type shoes are not permitted.)
- Hair must be pulled back and secured away from the face while serving food and / or drinks.

**\*\*The goal is for the Belle to present a professional image\*\***

### **Calendars and Schedule**

Belles and their parent or sponsor will be given a calendar of events at the organizational meeting at the beginning of the school year. Belle Coordinators, as well as the Belle President and Vice President will issue reminders for each upcoming event. The reminders are a courtesy. **It is the Belle's responsibility to maintain her own calendar and to attend Society activities in accordance with the policies outlined above.**

**Please also note that there are activities in which the parent / guardian is needed.** These activities are outlined in each grade level calendar.

## Service Requirements

Each Belle is required to attend **ALL** events listed for her grade level. Some of the Belle events require parents and/or guardians to be present. The Belle parent and/or guardian assigned to assist at those events **MUST** attend and participate.

**Each Belle must personally sign in and out at each event to get credit for attendance. Failure to do so will be counted as an absence for that event. It is the Belle's responsibility to serve. No one else may sign in for or serve in place of the Belle.**

Should it be necessary for a Belle to miss an event, she must notify the Belle Coordinators as soon as possible before the event begins. The Belle is required to make-up the missing hours at the **next available activity or at another activity identified by the Belle Coordinators**. Make-up opportunities are outlined on the Optional Belle Activities Calendar. Should the Belle miss the make-up assignment, she must pay a fine of \$25.00 per hour missed to retain her membership in the Belle Program. Freshman, Sophomore and Junior Belles are allowed two (2) make-ups and Senior Belles are allowed one (1) make-up. **Any Belle requiring more than the allowed number of make-ups must present an appeal to the Board of the Heritage Society to maintain membership in the Belle program.**

Additional make up opportunities will be determined and offered at the discretion of the Belle Coordinators and/or The Heritage Society. The needs are based on the Society's needs. Belles should be at each event 5 – 15 minutes before the beginning of the event or the Belle's assigned shift and must stay for the **entire shift**. Belles may **NOT** leave until they have been released by a Belle Coordinator or parent in charge of the event/shift.

If a parent/guardian is scheduled to work at an event and is unable to attend, it is her/his responsibility to switch with another Belle parent/guardian and notify the Belle Coordinator(s) of the change.

Other activities will come up during the year and participation in these are voluntary. Please refer to the "Optional Belle Activities" calendar.

## Heritage Society Gala Participation Requirements

The Spring Gala is the primary fundraising event of the year for the Heritage Society. In addition, the Gala is the culmination of the Senior's service as a Heritage Belle. The Senior Belles are presented to members of the Heritage Society and guests. The Senior Belles are escorted by a male family member or family friend. *Senior Belles - Please discuss any escort concerns with the Belle Coordinators.*

There will be a **mandatory** meeting at the Mansion prior to the Gala for **ALL** Freshmen, Sophomore and Junior Belles and the parent or guardian that will be working the Gala. The Belle Coordinators and Gala Committee members will explain the Belle and parent / guardian duties required for the event.

Because of their key role, the Heritage Belles serve in making the Spring Gala a success. Any Belle missing the Gala will have MANDATORY service hours assigned by the Belle Coordinators. ALL UNDERCLASSMEN BELLES MUST HAVE AT LEAST ONE PARENT WORK GALA (THIS IS MANDATORY).

A key fundraising component of the Gala is Raffle Drawing. **All Belles are required to support this effort by selling 3 raffle tickets each.**

***\*\*Failure to complete the mandatory service hours and gala requirements or pay fines by May 31, 2023, will result in the Belles termination from the program.\*\****

### **Communication**

The Remind101 App and email will be the main form of communication with Belles and Parents. **Belles may register by texting @d3ccgd to 81010 and parents may register with the parent Remind by texting @khhcdk to 81010.** We also ask that *only Belles register for the Belle Remind* since we are limited on the number of participants.

**Every Belle** is **required** to respond to direct communication through the Remind101 app. Not only is it a common courtesy to respond but, it also informs the Belle Coordinators that the message was seen and understood. The Remind App and email are the primary communication sources. The Remind101 App has a limited character space for each message, where you will receive a short message directing the Belle / parent / guardian to refer to a detailed email regarding an upcoming event or other important information. Any Belle who does not respond at least three (3) days before a scheduled event is subject to being removed from the event and will be responsible for making up the missed number of hours at the **next** scheduled event in which make up hours are allowed.

Thank you again for being such a great part of the Heritage Society of Washington County Belle Program.

Belle Coordinators 2022 - 2023

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