Giving gifts to graduating Aggie seniors has become a tradition among many Aggie Mothers’ Clubs across the state. As a way to celebrate the efforts put forth by Aggies to receive their diplomas, the mothers get together and decide on a small Aggie-themed item to present to each graduate in their club.

But the Austin Aggie Moms’ Club put a new twist on their graduation gifts in the past two years. Instead of giving their graduating seniors a small trinket or Aggie décor item, Club members decided to put the money that would have been spent on gifts toward a Century Club membership in the name of each Aggie graduate.

The IRS rules for 501c3 organizations limit the amount that can be spent per student, per gift. This limit, $25, is half the price of a Century Club membership for graduates less than three years out of school. The Aggie moms jumped at the opportunity to instill a tradition of giving back in their graduates. “We wanted to help the graduates build their own legacy of supporting TAMU,” said Kathy Johnston, the Club’s 2014-2016 past president.

With the foundation laid by the Austin Aggie Moms, these students will be able to continue supporting A&M after graduation just as A&M supported them in the years leading up to graduation. “We are helping them establish giving back to the university as something they do right from the start and from now on,” said Johnston. “This is our way of congratulating them on their graduation and giving them something that will cultivate the culture of giving back to A&M; something that will really make a difference that matters.”

Bailey Todd ’16 is grateful for the generosity of the Austin Aggie Moms, both leading up to and after graduation. “To me, this program proves how much the Austin Aggie Moms care about investing in not only our time here at Texas A&M but also ensuring that we have the opportunity to remain engaged as we begin our careers as Aggie grads,” she said. “I felt so taken care of by this group of ladies while I was in school, and I love that I am able to carry on the Texas A&M legacy because of their generosity!”
Through their generous gifts, the club and the graduating seniors are supporting Texas A&M and its students, former students and faculty. The Century Club supports student organizations, funds scholarships and carries on traditions. Money contributed by Century Club donors goes to create scholarships, foster new and existing student organizations and support A&M Clubs and constituent networks, like the Federation of Aggie Mothers’ Clubs, across the state and around the world. The Austin Aggie Moms hope to inspire other Moms’ Clubs to adopt this gift for their graduating seniors as well.

“Thanks to Nic Taunton and others at The Association, this has been made into an easy thing for Aggie Moms’ Clubs to do,” explained Johnston. “It’s a gift that has meaning and contributes to the future of Texas A&M. If we can be a part of that for our students, we have hit the mark. If all Aggie Moms’ Clubs began this tradition, many more graduates could be a part of supporting scholarships and programs through The Association for Former Students that promote and preserve the unique Aggie Spirit and leadership traditions of Texas A&M.”

International studies graduate Evan Flores ’16 is appreciative of the gift of a discounted Century Club membership because it allows him to remain connected to A&M. “When I became a former student, I knew that there would be challenges staying connected to A&M once I graduated. However, I found out that being a Century Club member offered me an opportunity to stay connected and give back to the school. When I am at a point of starting out in my professional career, this discounted membership allowed me to give back within my means.”

The Aggie graduates received their Century Club membership gifts at the Aggie Grads & Brags reception hosted by the Club in May of 2016 and 2017. The reception was a chance for graduates, their families and all members of the Club to come together to celebrate the achievements of the Club’s graduates and scholarship recipients.

Recent graduate Taylor Alders ’16 describes what the gift means to her, saying, “As recent graduates we have huge hearts for this fine university and hearts for giving, but the first couple years can be difficult getting your feet under you. This program allows young formers to be involved, and be recognized for that involvement, without breaking the bank. It’s a great stepping stone into a lifetime of legacy and giving.”

The Austin Texas A&M Mothers’ Club was founded in 1938. They have 200 members and continually support Aggie students and Texas A&M in two major ways; first, by being a resource and community for A&M parents; and second, by raising funds through the sale of their exclusive James Avery A&M clasp bracelet and by hosting the Texas A&M Singing Cadets in Austin which includes the Austin Aggie Mom’s Reveille Raffle. Funds raised go to support annual Local Merit Scholarships, fund Endowed Scholarships and support many university student organizations each year. Austin Aggie Moms also provide goody bags for students during the weeks before final exams.