

Fostering Strength By: **Meganne Lamprecht**

On April 11, 2015, the Junior League of Cedar Rapids hosted JLCR: Fostering Strength, Iowa’s largest foster care advocacy event, a dinner and silent auction. JLCR was honored to host Dr. Jennifer Arnold, MD, MSc, FAAP as keynote speaker for this year’s event.

Standing at just 3 foot, 2 inches, Dr. Arnold is best known for being featured in TLC’s docu-drama *The Little Couple*, featuring her husband Bill and children Will and Zoey. She has a rare type of dwarfism called Spondyloepiphyseal Dysplasia Type Strudwick (which involved more than 30 surgeries), and recently completed treatment for cancer.

Now in its 7th season, the show has proven to be an invaluable method to break down barriers and educate people around the country about people with disabilities. Dr. Arnold and her husband Bill recently embarked on their greatest adventure yet—parenthood. Will and Zoey are both adopted, and both children have forms of dwarfism.



Proceeds from the Fostering Strength fundraiser support Junior League of Cedar Rapids’ Bridging the G.A.P. project, which assists local foster care youth through a variety of activities. The evening commenced with a cocktail hour and silent auction featuring over 60 items, including an overnight stay and dinner for two at Hotel Kirkwood, Iowa football tickets, and family portrait sessions.

During the silent auction, attendees also had the opportunity to sponsor local foster care youth that are involved in the Partnership of Iowa Foster Care Youth Council’s *Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP)*, a program that JLCR connects with on a bi-weekly basis. Among these sponsorships were senior portrait sessions for the five AMP teens nearing high school graduation, a tradition that is often overlooked with seniors in the foster care system.

JLCR is also hoping to make the dreams of several AMP teens come true with the sponsorship of “camp experiences”. Basketball camp, piano lessons, art classes, and voice lessons are all activities that most teens take for granted, many of which AMP teens do not have the privilege of experiencing. Attendees had the opportunity to sponsor AMP individuals to experience camp or private lessons; these sponsorships not only include the general activity fees, but also the means to attend, such as art equipment or basketball shoes. Pottery created by participating AMP youth was also featured in the silent auction.

Together we can strive to better the lives of over 900 youth that are currently in the foster care system in Linn County.

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President's Letters: A Look Back By: Molly Baynes

It is so hard to believe that our League year is coming to an end! It's even harder for me to believe that on the first Tuesday of next month, I won't be at a board meeting. Since joining the board as VP Marketing in 2011, I've dedicated the first Tuesday of every month to JLCR. I'm not sure what I'll do with all of my free time!

I thought that I would wrap up the year by talking about what being a board member and President of JLCR has meant to me. I didn't get into League thinking that I ever wanted to be in a leadership position. I had a friend that told me to join so I thought I would try it out. There was no part of me that ever wanted to be President. In fact, my original plan was to go Sustaining after five years. That plan changed when we developed Bridging the GAP. The project really spoke to me. I loved seeing the direct impact we were having on the lives of kids. Many of you know that the project inspired my husband and me to become licensed foster parents.

In addition to my personal connection to the project, League has opened up so many doors for me. I was selected as the JLCR candidate for Leadership for Five Seasons, which expanded my network and made me even more aware of the needs and issues in our community. I attended AJLI conferences, which connected me to women all over the country and gave me world-class training.

Being in League has challenged me to get out of my comfort zone countless times. I was terrified of public speaking when I first joined. The thought of standing up in front of more than a couple dozen people literally nauseated me. I'll never forget the first time I had to talk at a GMM. I worked myself up into a frenzy and talked a mile a minute, breathless and red-faced. Thanks to League, the nausea has faded to a slight queasiness and I'm better at hiding it. I learned to advocate for our cause, speaking to the media on multiple occasions and even our elected officials. At the Annual Conference in Washington DC, I had the opportunity to participate in Hill Day, where we met with our senators and representatives to talk about local issues that our Leagues were tackling.

My leadership experience in League has also helped with my career. When I interviewed for my current position as a manager at Rockwell Collins, I had no formal leadership experience. The hiring manager asked me how I would overcome that and I started talking about my experiences as a leader in League. Motivating people who don't report to me and holding them accountable is a lot more difficult than motivating people that are getting a paycheck for their work. After I was hired I was able to see how well my nonprofit leadership experience translated into formal management skills.

I am truly grateful for the opportunity to be one of seventy women who have led this incredible organization. I hope that all of you feel inspired by our project and our mission. Use your years in League to try something new. Get everything out of League that you can. Do something completely out of your comfort zone. Take risks knowing that we won't let you fail. Volunteer because you feel passionate about our cause, not because you need to fulfill hours. Attend trainings and socials and meet new friends. Find a mentor. BE a mentor.

Thank you all for your continued commitment to JLCR. I look forward to seeing what this amazing group of women continues to accomplish!

2015 ODI By: Samantha McGrane & Cara Joens

"If you've seen one Junior League member, you've seen one Junior League member." Vicki Clark, AJLI

That phrase, from one of the esteemed Junior League trainers on diversity relations, rang so true during my experience at Spring ODI in Grapevine, Texas. Walking into the conference, I couldn't help but think how different these women - from all over the US, and three other countries - were from me. Their towering Christian Louboutin heels, Kate Spade weekend bags and beautiful accents intimidated me. The size of their Leagues- 5-10 times larger than tiny Cedar Rapids- intimidated me even more not to mention the amount that their fundraisers gross each year (100s of thousands each year!!).

After heading to the snack table post-opening session to drown my inferiority complex with some fried brownies, I overheard some other members talking about their project - foster care- and how they are looking to do more than just raise money for the cause. I had to say something, well, a lot of somethings....I ended up talking to the ladies for over a half hour about what we are doing with our suitcases, how we are looking to expand the suitcase program and the incredible things we have been able to do with the AMP youth and artwork at the Dreaming Bear. They were pretty impressed and excited to

take back some of the initiatives for their own Leagues.

Fast forward to our breakout sessions on membership where we were broken up into tables by the size of our Leagues. As I listened to the other women speak about the pros and cons of being a small League - not enough members to get things done, nice environment to grow leaders- I took a step back to think about what an amazing League we have. We are connected to each other, making major impact on a community issue, and building skills through our placements. We may be small but we are certainly mighty!

Throughout the rest of the weekend, my inferiority complex started to diminish as I learned of women who are doing the same things that we are doing - making an impact on their communities and developing the potential of women- each day. Every single woman at that conference believed in the mission of Junior League and put their sweat and tears into making an impact in their communities. It was an incredible experience to be a part of and I encourage anyone who may be interested in attending to apply because... If not you, who? If not now, when?

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Butterfly Kisses Recap By: Molly Mulholland

The 13th annual Frozen Butterfly Kisses was held on January 25th, 2015. The theme of this year's event was Disney's hit movie *Frozen*. The father-daughter dance, held at Kirkwood Hotel, had 405 guests in attendance. Junior League also sponsored a father and daughter from the Young Parents Network to attend the event.

There were many new additions to the dance this year. Elsa and Anna performed numerous songs and choreographed dances to a captive audience! Guests also spent time "Building a Snowman" and participating in the ring toss. Fruitzen served flavored snowballs (shaved ice), That One Cupcake Place donated 350 delicious cupcakes and many enjoyed dancing the afternoon away. The young girls couldn't wait to have their faces painted by FunnyFace and to receive some extra glamour from Mary Kay Cosmetics and Salon Voche.

A special thank you to all of the committee members and volunteers who made this event happen and be so successful! This year's event made over \$12,000 in profit!



BK Committee and Volunteers: from left to right (front) Rohini Singh, Heidi Lansgard, Amber Blomme, Molly Mulholland, Ashley Thompson (middle) Michelle Foley, Melanie Oletjenbrun, Molly Baynes, Nicole Kinzie, Maria Sanchez-Masi, (back): Christine Young, Samantha McGrane, Cara Joens, Jen Byers, Mandy Ferrante, Emily Burnham, Erica Bergfeld, Katie Schroeder, Lashonda Kennedy.



DONE IN A DAY: Gems of Hope By: **Melanie Oeltjenbruns**

We live in Iowa, so we know the winter routine. The way the first snow is exciting and the brisk air refreshing, and then the way February drags on far too long. When March appears on our calendars, one begins to see signs of spring and a little hope is stirred up.

As a March Done-In-A-Day, Junior League members were able to stir up some "spring hope" for patients with cancer in the Cedar Valley area. JLCR partnered with Gems of Hope for their annual Hope Blooms fundraiser. Five members spent time organizing bouquets and bunches of daffodils, greeting people and handing out orders during distribution out at Peck's Flower & Garden Shop .

This year through Hope Blooms, Gems delivered over 400 bouquets of daffodils to cancer patients in treatment in the area and over 300 Lion Hugs gifts to sick children being treated at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. Additionally nearly 2500 bunches of daffodils were spread throughout the community to various businesses and individuals.

Brianna Steffes was one of the greeters for distribution day. She said it was great to get to meet some of the people picking up their flowers and hear their stories about why they purchase. One gal told Brianna that both she and her husband are cancer survivors so they participate to help the cause and have [the daffodils] as a reminder of what they overcame.

Jessica Witt spent time at Pecks handing out daffodils that people had pre-ordered. She said for her it was nice to get to know the women involved with Gems of Hope. "They are all very passionate, and most have been with the organization for many years. I was also able to make a connection with another volunteer: she taught at Linn-Mar, where I went to High School. It truly was nice to learn more about Hope Blooms, and how it positively touches our community."

Katie Schroeder echoes the other JLCR volunteers in saying how it was great to learn more about Gems from the director and how they truly knew the stories of patients who were receiving these gifts of daffodils and Lions Hugs.

Gems of Hope, Inc. supports cancer patients and their families. At the core of the programs is the "gifts of hope" distribution. Volunteers handcraft cards with inspirational sayings and mount handmade earrings or bookmarks, or a serenity circle to the card. The gifts are distributed in oncology clinics and hospitals throughout the corridor. Junior League has partnered with Gems in the past to participate in their jewelry making workshops. Proceeds from the Hope Blooms campaign go to support Gems and the great programs they offer.

**Provide: Suitcases & Refresher Packs** By: **Kelli DeVries**

The Provide committee has worked very hard this 2014-2015 Junior League year to expand the way we are helping our community youth. This year we purchased supplies for 22 suitcases!! We will be packing them up on April 25th! This is a lower number than we usually purchase, the reason is we have not been going through a full 25 in one year so we looked for other ways to honor our donor intent and still keep with our Apartment in a Suitcase theme. After some brainstorming we have come up with Refresher Packs. These are a small storage tote packed with some basic household cleaning items and toiletries that need replaced most often. For example they have toilet paper, dish soap, laundry soap, toothpaste and other cleaning items. We have also created a Baby Pack. This includes some basics for a young mom that may need a few things to get started: bibs, diapers, a bottle, burp clothes, pacifiers and a teething ring. We are working to determine the demand for both packs and also how many we can do each year, as well as continue our larger project with the suitcases. The idea of not going through all 25 suitcases was curious to our team, so we also started thinking of ways to reach more kids. Originally we were working with Foundation 2 and the kids involved in AMP (Achieving Maximum Potential) and those signed up for their After Care program. Our committee reached out to Families Helping Families and Tanager Place to share the information about our program and our focus on teens. Both organizations have a need for and are very excited about the Apartment in a Suitcase. We now have three great community partners to expand our reach and help more teens! We look forward to Provide continuing to GROW!

2015-2016 Slated Positions

After a successful Slate Day, the JLCR Nominating Committee is pleased to announce the 2015-2016 Slate. The Nominating Committee had great success of interviewing for slated positions, and look forward to continuing the process in the coming years to ensure JLCR is the very best it can be!

2015-2016 JLCR Board of Directors

President Elect/VP, Planning: Abbie Covenah

VP Operations: Amanda Lane

VP Community: Christina Clements

VP Fund Development: Caitlin Wiedenheft

VP Communications: LaShonda Kennedy

VP Membership: Erica Bergfeld

At Large Board Members: Samantha McGrane & Molly Mulholland

2013-2014 JLCR Advisors

Amber Blomme, Heidi Landsgard, Beth McDougall,
Samantha McGrane, Megan Moran, Jessica Netol-
icky, Rohini Singh, Kristie Van Gorkom, Sally Wiley,
Jen Slaymaker

Membership Development Chair/Asst. Chair: Joanna Hein/Cara Joens

Membership Recruitment Chair/Asst. Chair: Mandy Ferrante/Brie Steffes

Project Research Chair/Asst. Chair: Melanie Oeltjenbruns/Kiran Sood

Ways & Means Chair/Asst. Chair: Kate O'Brien-May/Cally Murray

Resource Dev Chair/Asst. Chair: Maria Sanchez-Masi/Rachelle DuVall

Advisory Future Planning: Natalie Ditmars

Nominating Chair: Katie Harms & Jen Byers

New Member Spotlight

Name: Jessica Baseler

Current residence: Cedar Rapids

Hometown: Cedar Rapids

Where'd you go to school? Iowa State University

2015-16 Placement: External Relations Assistant
Chair

I joined Junior League because... I wanted to meet new people in the area and give back to the community I live and work in.

What are three things about yourself that someone wouldn't know by looking at you?

- 1) I'm a bookworm and I almost always have a book in my purse.
- 2) I love to sew and I make a lot of the clothes I wear.
- 3) One of my favorite summer activities is to go wine tasting.

What is your favorite time of year?

Spring because it's nice to see the flowers blooming and feel the weather warming up.



WELCOME!

BOARD MEETING MINUTES: April 2015

I. CALL TO ORDER 6:00 pm

Members in attendance- Cally, LaShonda, Natalie, Erica, Molly, Christina, Tara, Cara.

II. AGREEMENT ON THE AGENDA- approved

III. CONSENT AGENDA- approved

a. Approval of March minutes

IV. ACTIVE AGENDA

AMP speaker - Corey practiced his speech for Saturday.

1. Operations Council

a. Financials

b. Budget discussion

Discussion of project budget, Annual meeting food and possibility of amp youth providing dessert. All of our current suitcases are accounted for. Around \$9,000 still to spend within the committee. Earned \$3,000 from Safeco grant.

Discussion of moving forward with Digital Cheetah this year. There is room in the budget for this.

Motion to adopt the budget for 2015-16 as presented. 7-0-0 motion passes

Operation council moves to reallocate funds from multiple councils this year to cover digital cheetah expenses. 7-0-0 motion passes.

2. Planning Council

a. Policies & Procedures

Equipment policy - planning council moves to approve the

equipment policy 5-0-0

Members as employees- planning council moves to adopt members as employees policy. 5-0-0 motion carries.

Gift acceptance policy- planning council moves to approve the gift acceptance policy. 5-0-0. Motion carries

b. Survey—Should go out after fostering strength.

Potentially deploy this survey 2 times a year.

c. Project Proposal—New scholarship program discussion. Relationship with Families Helping Families discussed.

3. Fund Development Council

300 goal. 228 sold. Will be about \$10k below anticipated goal. Discussion of having a speaker leading event and if this is the right format. Board to provide Champagne for table hosts.

Donor event before the annual meeting.

a. Simply Serendipity- moved to May board meeting.

4. President's Report

a. Annual Meeting

Venue option- tcr, Czech and Slovak, museum of art, vets.

New Bo next Thursday, sustainer event. 5-7.

5. Other Business

Bring a friend to league night coming up. Bring your friends.

6. Closed Session

VII. Adjourn

SPRING BIRTHDAYS

April

Kimberly McGuire	Callie Graf
Carey Buresh	Abbie Covenah
Claire Myers	Laurie Wahlert
Valerie Buechel	Gretchen Stuhr
Natalie Ditmars	Sophia Joseph
Erin Langdon	Joann Sebetka

Happy Birthday!



May

Tori Owens	Karen Swanson
Brooke Zrudsky	Molly Mulholland
Jean Ferring	Jessica Boyle
Marion Koontz	Caitlin Ward
Alice Smith	Darline Davermann-Reid

Thank you to JLCR Sponsors!

Human Services Campus
317 7th Ave. SE,
Cedar Rapids

Address Service Requested

Phone: 319.364.7892
info@juniorleaguecr.org
www.juniorleaguecr.org



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IMPACT COMMITTEE:

Ashley Thompson, Chair

Junior League of Cedar Rapids (JLCR) is an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women and improving the community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable. JLCR reaches out to women of all races, religions and national origins who demonstrate an interest in and a commitment to voluntarism.

