

THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF CEDAR RAPIDS

FY20 Report to the Community



We literally can't sit still.

LOCAL CHAPTER FOUNDED 1932

The Junior League of Cedar Rapids (JLCR) is made up of more than 100 passionate, dedicated and innovative women volunteering to make a difference in their communities. As a 501(c)3 organization that is part of the Association of Junior Leagues International (AJIL), we abide by our mission as a group of "women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable." We focus on volunteer work, professional networking and training, and furthering issues of diversity and equality. The JLCR is open to all women at least 21 years of age.



The 2019-2020 League year was one for the record books. In digesting all that we accomplished this year there is one word that comes to mind - Innovation.

This League year called on all of us to use our innovative brains to rethink some of the core aspects of League - our organizational structure, our fundraisers, our project. It called us to not rely on what was comfortable or what was done in the past, but, instead, to look to the future. Who could have guessed that the future would include a derecho, layoffs and unemployment at an all time high, masks, online meetings and more?

Letter from the President

I am grateful that we all strengthened our innovation muscle during this past year and are primed and ready to take on all that this new League year brings. JLCR has already proven that we are capable of withstanding challenges and thriving. We continue to offer innovative solutions for AMP meals. We are in the process of updating our 5 year strategic plan with input from current members and sustainers, a strategic plan that will allow us to pivot when life's unexpected turns arise. We continue to find ways to support our community partners in the important work that they do in our community.

I am confident that the women of JLCR will continue to innovate and provide a place for women in our community to learn the important leadership skills necessary to lead through adversity. We will continue to be advocates for change and support in our community.

Thank you for your continued support this year.



Cara Joens
JLCR 2019-2020 President

THE
JUNIOR
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OF CEDAR RAPIDS

GUIDE. ADVOCATE. PROVIDE.

JLCR has made it our on-going focus to support young people aging out of foster care in Linn and surrounding counties through the **Bridging the G.A.P. (Guide, Advocate, Provide)** project. Young people who age out of foster care often lack traditional supports, including financial knowledge and resources, housing, life skills and more. By partnering with community agencies and leveraging JLCR efforts, we are able to impact many young people who otherwise may “fall between the cracks” in our communities.

THE CHALLENGE AT A GLANCE

Only **3 percent** of young people who age out of foster care **earn a college degree**.
50 percent of youth who age out of foster care will **develop a substance abuse issue**.
As much as **70 percent** of females who age out of foster care will become **pregnant by age 21**.

HOW WE RESPOND



GUIDE.

In Project Guide, we partner with community groups to provide meals at a bi-weekly peer support and life skills group for youth who have been or are in foster care placement.

It is an opportunity to provide a reliable, healthy and home-cooked meal for 10-30 youth twice a month and talk with the youth during the meal. Youth also participate in life-skills lessons and peer support activities to help them process emotions and experiences, and prepare them for independent living.



ADVOCATE.

In Project Advocate, we learn about the issues and barriers facing youth in the foster care system and when they age out in order to better advocate for their needs. We host speakers and share resources to learn more about the current environment, and what the youth we serve might be facing.

Annually, we travel to the Iowa state capitol to speak with lawmakers on the challenges youth in foster care face. Unfortunately, this traditional trip was canceled due to COVID.



PROVIDE.

In Project Provide, we help fill gaps that young adults may face when they age out of foster care, including first apartment basics, housing expenses, books and supplies for higher education and training, and more.

We have pioneered the Apartment in a Suitcase basic supplies project, the Housing First program and more to help provide the items young adults need to start their independent lives on the right foot.

Check out our three pillars in more detail on the next page.

PROJECT

GUIDE.

Project Guide within the **Bridging the G.A.P.** initiative focuses on providing social-emotional and life skills support for youth currently in foster care or who have aged out of foster care. We partner with Foundation 2 Crisis Services and the Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP) group in Cedar Rapids to provide meals and program support at their bi-weekly meetings. Because of JLCR, the Cedar Rapids-based group is the only one in Iowa that receives a meal at each meeting.

This year,
members served
300
meals to AMP youth.

I can't tell you how many times I have heard from youth how much they look forward to having a full meal with their peers at AMP. This act of service wouldn't be possible without the dedication of the members of Junior League. They are eager and willing to chat with the youth and get to know them. It's a great opportunity for AMP youth to see positive community members. Foundation 2 and AMP are blessed to have such an amazing partnership with Junior League of Cedar Rapids.

- Shelby Holsapple, AMP Facilitator

PROJECT

ADVOCATE.

Project Advocate within the **Bridging the G.A.P.** initiative focuses on supporting youth in foster care from a policy and advocacy standpoint. As we learn more about local issues facing young adults in our communities, we feel compelled to advocate for them to receive fair care, access to resources and more.

In September 2019, we hosted Senator Liz Mathis and Kelly Malone from Four Oaks Family & Children's Services as guest speakers before the General Membership Meeting to talk about legislature that impacts Iowa's youth and families, including those involved in foster care.



PROJECT

PROVIDE.

Project Provide within the **Bridging the G.A.P.** initiative focuses on providing physical items many young people need as they establish their independence. These are often items that young adults get from their support network and can be expensive to purchase all at once.

APARTMENT IN A SUITCASE

The Apartment in a Suitcase project provides the basics for independent living and is provided at no cost to young adults aging out of foster care. These are often gaps that are created when a young person doesn't have a strong support system.

37

suitcases distributed

\$700

value per suitcase

59

items per suitcase

HOUSING FIRST PROJECT

Launched in 2018, the JLCR Housing First Project provides one year of rent-assistance for a select number of teens and young adults who have aged out of foster care in Cedar Rapids. Working with the Foundation 2 Crisis Services' Independent Living Program, we pay 100 percent of participants' rent for six months before reducing the financial support by one third every three months. The young adults work with a support network to learn about budgeting and life skills, with the goal that they will be more financially stable after the year of assisted housing through JLCR.

The partnership Foundation 2 has with Junior League of Cedar Rapids is beyond the scope of our hopes for our young adults. Specifically, the Junior League of Cedar Rapids Housing First Project they offer to our young adults has not only helped to provide stability in their housing, but allowed them to free themselves from accumulated debt, able to focus on and complete their education and build up personal savings accounts. When a young person has the ability to build up their personal savings account, they can pay for unexpected car repairs, college courses and save for larger assets such as a car or a home of their own.

- Renae Koth, Foundation 2 Crisis Services Independent Living Program

JLCR SCHOLARSHIP FUND

We know that young adults often incur unplanned expenses - from moving expenses to books for school - that can derail their tight budgets. Without a safety net of friends, family or financial knowledge, youth who have aged out of foster care can be facing homelessness or other risks very quickly.

The JLCR Scholarship Fund offers needs-based scholarships for a variety of expenses the young people we serve face, including unexpected car repairs, technology for school and utilities. **In 2019-2020, we granted more than \$8,300 in scholarships to youth in Cedar Rapids and surrounding communities.**

DONE IN A DAY

PROJECTS

Done in a Day (DIAD) and Done in a Meeting (DIAM) projects provide high-impact volunteer opportunities throughout the year without large time commitments. This year, our five DIAD and two DIAM projects included hands-on opportunities, donation drives, and more.



Sleep in
Heavenly Peace
bed making



Waypoint
Donation Drive



National Adoption Day

TRAINING

OPPORTUNITIES

One of the pillars of JLCR is the opportunity to diversify members' professional and community experience through various high-quality and meaningful training workshops and trips. JLCR provides financial support to help members attend local and national trainings that may otherwise be unattainable.

AT A GLANCE

JLCR members Kelsey Veldhuizen and Elyse Garlock attended the Organizational Development Institute (ODI) in fall 2019 in Grapevine, Texas. They joined 270 delegates from 88 leagues to learn about increasing community impact, advancing diversity and inclusion, fund development and more.

I was able to connect with members of the Junior League of Olympia Washington and the Junior League of Waterloo-Cedar Falls Iowa. Both of these Leagues are members of Small Leagues Big Impact. It was great to be able to talk with similar leagues and understand what they were doing, what worked for them, what didn't. It was definitely an eye-opening experience in terms of the reach and impact of Junior League.

- Kelsey Veldhuizen, JLCR member

ADAPTING OUR

PANDEMIC RESPONSE

In the spring of 2020, the coronavirus pandemic impacted multiple aspects of JLCR - from funding to meetings to community needs. We formed a COVID-response committee and pivoted many of our plans to best serve our community and members while observing safety measures.

FUNDRAISING

Our major annual fundraiser, the Fostering Strength luncheon, was scheduled for May 2020. Due to the pandemic, we canceled this event, resulting in a financial loss that impacted our projects.

This was the first year that JLCR introduced JLCR The Campaign, four social media-focused campaigns that helped connect current members, sustainers, community partners and new donors, paired with two sustainer in-person events. It was a new opportunity to expand our fundraising methods without requiring as many in-person events.

We anticipate that COVID-19 will continue to impact fundraising efforts for the foreseeable future, and we are working to change fundraising strategies in FY21 to meet those needs.

MEETINGS

We switched to virtual-only meetings in spring 2020, pioneering the virtual option unlike we had ever done before. The year-end banquet, typically held at Coe College in Cedar Rapids, was held on Zoom in May. While members expressed missing the in-person connection, we appreciated the flexibility to remain active in Junior League while still observing social distancing guidelines.

Members also organized a "social distancing support" Facebook page and coordinated online meet ups centered around hobbies, socializing and more.

COMMUNITY NEED

The coronavirus pandemic also impacted the young people we serve, including increased job loss and financial challenges, a lack of social networks and support, and increase risk for poor mental health. As a result, we saw an increase in scholarship asks and tailored our projects to fill the current needs. We allocated excess funding from projects that had been suspended due to social distancing and filled more scholarship requests and provided more in-kind needs, including food and gas cards.

FY20 JLCR

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Our JLCR Board of Directors are chosen each year through an application and interview process. Their charge is to govern JLCR in the way that they best see fit, keeping in mind the organization's mission, by-laws, history, and future.

The 2019-2020 Board of Directors are

(top row, left to right)

- Katie Curtis: VP of Communications
- Adrienne Moline: VP of Community
- Michelle Schiess: At-Large Board Member
- Nicole Ridge: VP of Membership
- Emily Teeter: Secretary

(bottom row, left to right)

- Jessica Netolicky: VP of Fund Development
- Samantha Rogers: At-Large Board Member
- Nicole Kintzle: President-Elect
- Cara Joenes: President

AT A GLANCE

FINANCIALS

ASSETS

Cash	\$81,083
Endowment	\$222,376
Accounts Receivable	\$7,712
Certificate of Deposit	\$28,403
Fixed Assets	\$62
Other Assets	\$4,113

TOTAL ASSETS \$343,749

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$ 2,614
Deferred Revenues-Dues	\$ 26,519

TOTAL LIABILITIES

\$29,133

Net Assets

Unrestricted

\$314,616

TOTAL NET ASSETS

\$314,616

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS \$343,749

OF CEDAR RAPIDS

ANNUAL MEETING

AWARD RECIPIENTS

In May 2020, JLCR hosted our annual meeting to close the FY20 Junior League year and celebrate the year's accomplishments. Due to the pandemic, the meeting was held on Zoom. The following members and community partners received awards due to their impact with JLCR in the last year.

Unsung Hero Award - Meesh Last

For her quiet dedication to Project Provide's Apartment in a Suitcase project, putting in many hours outside of 'regular' JLCR

Spirit Award - Allison Witters

For her growth of the Project Guide AMP meals and ability to motivate volunteers

JLCR Leadership Award - Amanda Zhorne

For her passion for foster youth and the embodiment of the values of JLCR

Wheels in Motion Award - Elyse Garlock

For her reliable, thoughtful and organized way she stepped up to chair a very busy committee her first active year

Rising Star Award - Coleen Wienck

For the dedication and involvement to JLCR as a new member, including attending many events and organizing new member projects

I'm a Hustler, Baby! Award - Jodie Carlson

For her years of skilled assistance with preparing grants to help further JLCR community programs

Honorary Members Award- Grace and Sarah Jungling

For their years of support for their mother Angie, the JLCR Office Manager, and volunteer time including decorating the office

Contract Whisperer Award - Alex Heirl

For her time and expertise in navigating contracts for events, including Fostering Strength

Sustainer of the Year Award - Natalie Clouse

For lending her expertise to reviewing contracts, by-laws and more for League

Robert O. Daniel Community Service Award - Foundation 2 Crisis Services

For their long standing work as a critical partner in the Bridging the G.A.P project and support for youth in foster care

JLCR

SPONSORS

Thank you to everyone who supports JLCR projects through sponsorships. We appreciate your support!

Accel Group

Alliant Energy

CarePro Health Services

Foundation 2 Crisis Services

Green State Credit Union

Heartland Express

Hills Bank

United Fire Group

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