



JUNIOR LEAGUE OF
CEDAR RAPIDS

IMPACT

Fall Issue – December 2018

It is amazing to think that we are already half way through our 2018-2019 league year. I am so proud of how much our membership has accomplished so far and excited for what's ahead in the second part of the year.

During the 2018 AJLI annual conference, an organization-wide values statement was approved. At each general membership meeting this year, we have been highlighting one of these values. When I describe my league experience to someone, I always have trouble summing it up in a couple of sentences. Junior League is not just about leadership or community service. It's not just about the networking or social opportunities. The Junior League experience is about all the small and large things that members do that combine into a massive ball of community-changing energy! The values statement describes who we are at the core of our organization. For me, on those days where I'm stressing about something like making the GMM PowerPoint just right, reflecting on Junior League's values brings things back into perspective and reminds me why I love serving this organization.

JUNIOR LEAGUE VALUES

Diversity: The Junior League welcomes all women who value our Mission. We are committed to inclusive environments of diverse individuals, organizations and communities.

Collaboration: We believe lasting societal change is achieved through both collaboration and meaningful disagreement. Living the value of collaboration inspires us to accomplish more together.

Community: We believe a strong sense of community is essential to human well-being. Living the value of community provides a foundation of inclusion, which allows us to make a greater impact on the world around us.

Community: We believe a strong sense of community is essential to human well-being. Living the value of community provides a foundation of inclusion, which allows us to make a greater impact on the world around us.

Empowerment: We believe that the empowerment of women is a necessary requirement to create positive, lasting societal change. Living the value of empowerment fosters trust and confidence in each other.

Leadership: We believe in the unique power of women's leadership abilities to transform communities for the better. Living the value of leadership allows us to make a collective difference.

Respect: We believe respect is a fundamental human right. Living the value of respect instills in us an unconditional positive regard for others.

Service: We believe it is through service that we build core relationships with others. Service is the lens through which we decide how we will invest our time and resources. Living the value of service empowers us as catalysts for lasting community change.

With most organizations, it is necessary to adapt and change as our membership needs and the community needs change. This issue of IMPACT describes some of those changes and opportunities for our league to continue to fulfill the needs of our members and our community. I hope you enjoy reading about the fantastic things going on this year in JLCR!

Sincerely,

Samantha McGrane
JLCR President 2018-2019

UNSTOPPABLE
JL®



JLCR Fundraising Update

At the end of the 2017-2018 league year, the Ways and Means committee motioned and the membership approved to discontinue Butterfly Kisses as fundraiser. Ways and Means also proposed developing our Little Black Bag challenge advocacy event to into a fundraiser, however the General Membership did not want to proceed in this direction. What now?!?!? Where are we going to get the money for the annual funding of Bridging the G.A.P.?

While going back to the drawing board, Ways and Means is looking for ways to include the General Membership in the process of developing our new fundraiser. This fall we proposed two initial fundraising approaches for membership to choose from; continue with one large event or create smaller campaign style events. General Membership has conveyed a consensus in being more interested in smaller campaign style events. Currently Ways and Means is moving forward in a very transparent way developing ideas and creating a fundraising package with Fund Development which will be presented to general membership for approval.

JLCR always prioritizes raising funds responsibly. Going forward we are creating a more calculated fundraising approach; developing avenues with less upfront investment to minimize our cost to raise a dollar and maximize our impact. We plan to further develop our established relationships with sponsors, donors, sustainers, and community partners. All of this benefits our membership, our community, and our project. In an attempt to meet the growing and changing membership 'where they are' you will likely see a lot of new ideas for JLCR. We invite you to grow and change with us!

Fostering Strength 2019

SAVE THE DATE! TUESDAY, APRIL 30, 2019!

JLCR is excited to announce that we have set a date for the 2019 Fostering Strength Advocacy Luncheon and fundraiser! The event is set for Tuesday, April 30th at the Doubletree by Hilton in downtown Cedar Rapids. JLCR is thrilled to welcome Steve Pemberton as this years keynote speaker. Steve is considered one of America's most inspiring business and HR leaders. His triumphant life story is about defying seemingly insurmountable beginnings as a child orphaned into foster care. As told in the major motion picture and acclaimed best selling memoir, *A Chance in the World*, adversity only fueled his desire to become a man of resilience, determination and vision. Steve has gone on to find success as a corporate executive, innovative diversity and inclusion though leader, visionary youth advocate and acclaimed speaker devoted to inspiring and helping others.



Community Relations - National Adoption Day 2018



This year for our November DIAD (Done-In-A-Day) project we participated in partnership with Four Oaks. November happens to be National Adoption month. We were contacted by Lana Kelsey and given information about what they have done in the past for families that are adopting a child or children on National Adoption Day. In years before Four Oaks has gathered items to present to families in the gift basket. This year Junior League of Cedar Rapids took over the gift basket present through member donations and Community Relations Committee budget. Items were gathered at November's GMM, packaged together the next day at a basket making gathering, and then given to families on Friday November 16th at the Linn County Juvenile Justice Center in downtown Cedar Rapids. Basket items included a movie, popcorn, candy, other treats, a photo album, gift cards to bowling and Parlor City. Junior League also supplied the cake for celebration. Members were present during adoptions and got to see first-hand the experience of adoption day. It was a humbling and loving experience.

Project Advocate - Gallery of Strength

Earlier this year, JLCR invited current foster and/or adoptive parents to participate in a holiday photo shoot. The families shared their stories of strength and received professional photos at no cost to them. Every foster and adoptive parent has a story to tell about how they got to the place they are today, but the common theme is strength. Strength in spirit, strength in resiliency and strength in trust in one another. The stories below represent a small sample of the stories collected this year. All of the stories we collected will be shared at Fostering Strength as our Gallery of Strength.



"Using My Experiences" by Julie Heidger

"What works for 80-90 percent of your students might not work for children who have experienced trauma or were exposed to drug use in utero." Julie

Julie is mother to four sons- Twin biological boys that are 6 years old and two sons adopted from foster care, ages 8 years old and 2 ½ years old. "At one point, we had three boys under 2 years old in the house!" laughed Julie.

Julie's advice to those considering foster care is that "It's going to be easier than you think it is, but harder you think it is. You'll love the system and hate the system, because you're so invested, things feel personal. You want what's best for them. It's a learning process." "I also understand, that people considering foster care might be worried that they wouldn't love a child that they didn't give birth to. But that is most definitely not the case. You still kiss the boo boos and scare the monsters away in the same way. It makes your heart grow bigger."

"Love. They'll Never Forget It" by Lisa Chase

"If you have an opportunity, do it. It's well worth saving them from what they could possibly face. It's worth falling in love with the child and having them feel safe and secure and feeling that love, even if it's a short time. They'll never forget it." says Lisa, when asked what advice she would give considering becoming a foster parent.

After having 5 biological children, Lisa was not expecting to have any additional children. In 2014 she was notified that her niece and nephew from Florida were removed from their home and in need of foster care. Lisa knew nothing about the children's story or their history, but she knew that she couldn't imagine the siblings being separated. While Emma and Noah knew Lisa as "Mom" for much longer, they were adopted by Lisa in September of 2017. They are a thriving family! Gaining a wonderful mom and 5 other siblings that love them.



Lisa is grateful of the support she had during her foster care and adoption process. She considers herself lucky to have a wonderful adoption team, DHS and court workers. "Even after the adoption they are still supportive, and the children have a fantastic support network at school. "says, Lisa.

Project Provide - Housing Pilot

When we talk to the local foster youth aging out of care, we consistently hear that unstable jobs, lack of affordable housing and inaccessible transportation are their biggest barriers. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, a Housing First approach is "guided by the belief that people need basic necessities like food and a place to live before attending to anything less critical, such as getting a job, budgeting properly, or attending to substance use issues." With our Housing First Pilot we are giving local youth the housing stability they need to start making progress on the job stability, transportation, mental health or other critical needs. For youth accepted into the Housing First Pilot, JLCR pays their rent for six months while the participant puts 20% of their income into savings. If the participant completes Waypoint's Tenant Academy by the end of the six months, JLCR tapers the rent we pay down by 25% increments every two months for the next six months. The participant also reduces the amount of their income they put into savings. All participants are also working with a Self-Sufficiency Advocate through Foundation 2's Aftercare Services. At the end of the year, the participants will have achieved a full year of housing stability and will be prepared with an emergency fund sufficient to help maintain stable housing going forward. So far we have three participants in our pilot and hope to add at least one more before the end of the League year!

Sustainer Fall Luncheon & Fashion Show

Great conversation, food and fun were had by all at the JLCR Sustainer Fall Fashion show and luncheon on October 17th. 2018-19 Sustainer president Cyndie Birchansky planned every detail of this fantastic event at the Cedar Rapids Country club. "My hopes were to get 12-20 friendly faces," said Cyndie, "but we had an overwhelming response. 56 JLCR Sustainers joined together with our local Boutique/Stores to get us ready to Razzle Dazzle for the holidays".

Huge thanks goes out to fellow Sustainers Nina Brundel (Kieck's Career Apparel), Joy Purdy (Joy Women's Clothing), Daniel Rings (Mode Fashions), Kandise Weiland (Industry Fashions) and Nikki Kettlekamp (Scout Marion). The Cedar Rapids Country club showed us how to dine in style with a fabulous luncheon and shopping at the pop-up stores before and after made the whole day an event to remember!



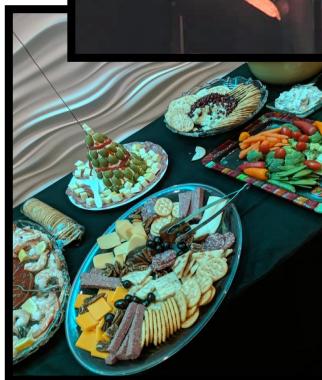
JLCR President Samantha McGrane and 2018-19 Sustainer President Cyndie Birchansky.



Sustainer Holiday Party & Cookie Exchange

JLCR members gathered together again on December 5, 2018 for a fantastic Sustainer Holiday Party & Cookie Exchange event. Once again Sustainer President Cyndie Birchansky planned this fun, festive evening at Theatre Cedar Rapids Linge Lounge.

Members gathered for some great cocktails, hor d'ourves and holiday treats. Many members brought goodies to share and also brought cookies to exchange. Best of all the group included a variety of attendees including current active members, recent sustainers and even lifetime members. What a great group! Thank you to all who attended and a huge thank you again to Cyndie for your hard work and planning.



New Member Class

Early in 2018, the JLCR Marketing and Membership recruitment committees made some new plans to step up recruitment efforts for the upcoming year. JLCR sponsored booths at both the HER and IWLC leadership events. In addition they held several socials over the summer months to invite possible new members to learn more about our fantastic organization.

These efforts paid off and we are pleased to have an incoming class of over 25 new members! This fall they have spent time learning about JLCR development opportunities, our Bridging the G.A.P. project, and about how their impact will be seen in our community. With such a large group they have been divided into 3 groups to work on 3 small projects and a fundraiser before becoming full members in January.

New Member Projects:

- Happy Mail – Project group 1 will be creating bi-monthly packages for teens in AMP/ Foster care – Holidays, Valentine's Day, End of school year etc.
- Kids Packs – Project group 2 will be creating kids packs. Packs for 3 ages groups entering care / moving homes that will include some personal hygiene and comfort items. Each will include a blanket, pjs, a book / journal, toothbrush/toothpaste and more. Each pack will be in a nice duffle bag to carry their items in the future and the teen group will also be given a plastic tub for additional belongings.
- Crock pot night – Group 3 will be hosting a crock pot night in January for Community Partnership for Protecting Children. Providing a crock pot, recipe book and ingredients for at least 1 meal to each family as well as tips and tricks on cooking with a crock pot.



The new member class is also holding a Women's Personal Safety / Self-defense class fundraiser! See details below! This class of new members is already doing some phenomenal work and we look forward to getting to know them this spring! Welcome to these great new members and look for more updates in the spring!

January 12th - 9am – 12 noon

**Personal & Professional Safety Course to be held at the Human Services Campus, 2nd fl.
ALL ARE WELCOME!***

**Taught by Chris Smaby from the CRPD
ALL ARE WELCOME!***

Early Bird price before January 10, 2019:
- \$25 for JLCR active or sustaining members
- \$30 for non-JLCR member

After January 10th or at the door:
- \$30 for JLCR active or sustaining members
- \$35 for all others



*Please note that while all aged girls / women are welcome, young ladies must be totally aware of the nature of a sexual assault as this material will be covered.

Mentor Program

The Junior League of Cedar Rapids (JLCR) began a pilot mentoring program in February of 2018 with the goal of increasing member satisfaction, engagement and retention. In addition, this helps JLCR fulfill our mission to provide development and training for members. It is structured as one on one mentoring, meeting at least once per month. JLCR members applied to be a part of the program, with seven mentor pairs being matched. The pilot year was set up as a twelve month program with a kickoff orientation session to provide training and resources to participants on how to have a successful mentoring relationship. The Membership Development Chair/Assistant Chair are available to provide support for participants if they run into mentoring challenges. In addition, the Membership Development Chair/Assistant Chair have checked it at the one month and mid-year marks and will obtain more detailed feedback at the end of the year. JLCR looks forward to continuing this program in the future and providing valuable training and satisfaction to our members.

"Serving as a Mentor in the JLCR Mentoring program has been a rewarding experience. As a Sustainer and Past President, it has been a tangible way for me to both give back and re-engage with the work currently before the League. Even just a single, monthly coffee meeting has allowed me to get to know Ashley personally and professionally. Working with her to mold a personal, tailored vision for her future has been an honor; to work on HER agenda and ways to advance and better herself is a joy. I would challenge any Sustainer to consider serving as a Mentor -- give back all you've been given!"

- Karen Swanson

"When the mentoring program was announced I was eager to participate. It sounded like a great opportunity to get to know another Junior League member and get some new insight into life, career, and Junior League. I was so excited when I got paired with Karen! She has a ton of League experience and is genuinely great person. We meet every month for coffee and I always wish we had more time. Karen comes with an open mind and offers objective feedback, which is especially helpful when emotions are tied into the matter. We don't necessarily have an agenda for each meeting, but she has helped me achieve my goals of figuring out what kind of path I want to have with Junior League, and how to navigate work, family, and League better. I would recommend the mentoring program to anyone looking for another viewpoint on life or just looking to make a new friend!"

- Ashley Massa



Mentor partners Ashley Massa and Karen Swanson enjoy conversation and coffee at the Early Bird Café.



The 2018-19 JLCR Board:
Front row (left to right): Angel Burns, Nicole Kintzle,
Samantha McGrane, Adriane Moline. Back row:
Erica Bergfeld-Reed, Jennifer Skogman, Cara
Joens, Jodie Carlson, Crystal Hardinger.

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WOMEN
TO LEAD SINCE 1901

THE JUNIOR LEAGUE

Organizational Development Institute by Renee & Jessica

We attended the Organizational Development Institute (ODI) in October 2018. It was held in Little Rock, Arkansas and we met representatives from over 90 Leagues. At this meeting, we got to reinforce our knowledge of the AJLI structure, learn more about our historical roots, and got a first-hand peek at how other Leagues run their organization. Other Leagues look very different than our chapter in Cedar Rapids. Bigger cities have League sizes of over 5,000, and other leagues from smaller cities have only 20 active members.

It was amazing for us to see Cedar Rapids represented as one of the top Leagues in AJLI. Cedar Rapids was consistently meeting the top of the list for going above and beyond toward implementing AJLI's various strategic priorities. We felt very proud! Women often asked us questions about how our organization worked because they saw our name listed as one of the top Leagues.

We got to meet many amazing women from all over the U.S. and some parts of Canada and we both came home with more FaceBook friends than we left with. But, for us, it was most exciting to get to know each other a little bit better. One of the League's we really connected with was from Lansing, Mi— they are similar in size, and we hope to continue contact with them.

Jessica went on the fund development track and Renee went on the diversity and inclusion track. This ODI was the first to offer diversity and inclusion as a specific track.



Jessica Baustain and Renee Penalver enjoying a break between sessions at ODI in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Diversity and Inclusion: I learned so much about the world from attending ODI and being on the diversity track. Most importantly, this conference reiterated that most people do not think as I do, and that is okay. And reminded me to look at situations through multiple perspectives. Many questions I have had my entire life about race, class, gender, ethnicity were answered in the diversity sessions. Our next big step to increase diversity and inclusion is to get to know each other a little bit more. We have created an informal way to get to know each other through sharing meals, I call this the "Leaguers who Lunch".

Fund Development: Liz Farr provided an eye opening experience regarding Fund Development and Junior League. She asked us to think in depth about our fundraising strategy, why someone is philanthropic, creating our case for support and how we can create donor relationships. I enjoyed hearing what other leagues are doing to raise funds. It was also helpful to hear that some leagues are facing the same fund development struggles as JLCR and hearing solutions from other leagues. I left with conversations starters to bring back to JLRC.

We are very grateful for this opportunity and hope to attend more meetings in the future!

Thank you to our JLCR Sponsors!

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Pearson

JLCR Active Member Highlights

BIANCA FOSTER

1. Your backstory (Family, College, Job, hometown, how you ended up in Cedar Rapids, etc.): I am originally from Orange Park Florida.. I attended Florida A & M University where I received a bachelors of Arts/ Political Science/ Public Management. I received a masters degree in Public Administration from Walden University.

2. Favorite local food spot in the corridor: Reds in North Liberty (steak brie flat bread), & Irish Democrat in CR – cheese wontons are the best!

3. You've got to get yourself ready for something big (think a big presentation at work, a day of skydiving, or handling a house full of kids without coffee). What do you do to get yourself pumped up?

I am a music guru! Hearing something constant keeps my mind focused and on ease. It can be anywhere from smooth jazz to top 40 to country to hip hop!

4. What is something that triggers happy memories? Family, friends, & food happiness to my soul

5. One of the best pieces of advice that you've ever received- favorite quote: The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others 'Gandhi'... the moment I realized it's not about me my life changed forever I love helping, imparting into people, and making lasting relationships. It drives me!

6. What are you currently reading, listening to, or binge watching? The slight edge- turning simple disciplines into massive success & happiness by Jeff Olson.



Bianca Foster (left) and Rachel Rigdon (right) cooking at an AMP meeting.

JODIE CARLSON

1. your backstory (Family, College, Job, hometown, how you ended up in Cedar Rapids, etc.): I grew up in the Quad Cities (Bettendorf) and went to Wartburg College where I studied Math and Business with the goal of becoming an actuary. Right after graduation, I moved out to the Washington, DC area for a role in actuarial pension consulting. After a little over a year, my (now) husband and I decided we wanted to get back to Iowa and I ended up finding an actuarial position at Transamerica here in CR where we've been ever since - going on 10 years now! We've been married for just over 8 of those years and we've got two fur babies (beagles) at home.

2. Favorite local food spot in the corridor: Lion Bridge Brewery and Saucy Focaccia

3. You've got to get yourself ready for something big (think a big presentation at work, a day of skydiving, or handling a house full of kids without coffee). What do you do to get yourself pumped up?

I tend to have more energy if I get in a good workout - this also helps with nerves which I often have before a big presentation (and certainly would have if I were going skydiving!!).

4. What is something that triggers happy memories?

Music is definitely something that can bring back great memories for me.

5. One of the best pieces of advice that you've ever received: A good friend of mine passed away of cancer last year after an over 3 year battle. Despite going through more emotional and physical challenges than I could ever imagine, she maintained her optimism and focused on being grateful for all the positive things she had in life like great family and friends. Whenever I find myself getting caught up in trivial things, I try to remind myself of her example to focus on being thankful for those things that really matter.

6. What are you currently reading, listening to, or binge watching? Even though we've seen every episode I don't want to know how many times, The Office is on pretty regularly at our house, even if just in the background. I've also lately been listening to the And That's Why We Drink podcast when I'm out for a run.



Left to right: Amy Fell, Jodie Carlson and Victoria Mueller working at a Community Relations event in 2018.

JLCR Sustaining Member Highlights

CYNDIE BIRCHANSKY

1. Active in League: I was an active member for 14 years in the 1980's and I am currently serving as sustainer president.

2. What was the big project while you were active in JLCR?

Old MacDonald's Farm, the Madge Phillips Center from ideation to Opening its doors, Under the Harvest Moon fundraiser, Butterfly Kisses began and Taylor mentoring program.

3. How did your league experience set you up for success?

I literally served as every VP and Chaired fundraisers. I also did membership and nominating twice. These positions helped me meet the best people ever which I have stayed friends with and followed around on different boards. I developed organizational skills, budgeting, group leadership, event planning, volunteering and staying involved in community.

4. What advice would you give to someone who is considering a leadership placement in league? Take it! do not even ask yourself, it is the right thing to

do. you will learn, make new friends, maybe even flop but your committee will be right there to pick you back up. You may meet a future boss, go out on a limb. Dare to learn. Try something opposite of your norm. If you are a CPA, go for membership or project planning. This is a safe place to do what you do not do everyday. I had three kids in 4 years and still did JLCR. It was my adult play group, my sanity and maybe insanity as well. As you can see I loved every year and still



Sustainer President Cyndie Birchansky (left) with current President Samantha McGrane

LEAH RODENBURG

1. Active in League: I joined JLCR in 1996 when I moved to Cedar Rapids from Des Moines. I remained active until 2005. I have stayed involved with League ever since as a proud sustainer and also served as Sustainer President. I have always said that joining League was one of the most important decisions I have ever made.

2. My favorite position was President Elect. I had an excellent mentor, Lydia Brown, who was President that year. It was a great year of learning with less stress of having someone else in charge! I really enjoyed working together on our signature project, EIEIO at Old McDonald's Farm. A highlight was traveling with Lydia to the President/PE conference and learning from her all year. To this date, we are close friends and have worked together on many local non-profit initiatives. We always still talk about League when we get together!

3. What was your big project? When I joined we were just finishing the Madge Phillips Center, which continues to be a very important asset in our community. I joined the Waypoint Board mainly because of the Center. But the main project I spent my blood, sweat and tears on was Old MacDonald's Farm at Bever Park.

4. How did your league experience set you up for success? When I was active in League, I worked in Corporate Communications at Alliant Energy. My manager, Diane Ramsey, was a sustainer of Junior League and understood my passion for League. My company allowed me to use AJLI conferences as professional development opportunities and was very supportive of my leadership positions. My League and community experience helped me land my current position with the Alliant Energy Foundation. I have been with Alliant Energy for 22 years and use the skills and network I gained from League every day. It's been invaluable to me.



Leah Rodenburg (right) poses with fellow JLCR Sustainer Hilary Livengood during a JLCR leadership conference in Seattle, WA in 2003.



5. What advice would you give to someone who is considering a leadership placement in league? Please step up and run for an officer position or chair a committee! You won't regret it. You will gain so much more than you put into it. You will have the opportunity to meet and work with women you might not have the chance to in another setting. You will have a chance to attend fantastic training opportunities and meet League members from across the country. And, it will look fantastic on your resume!



JUNIOR LEAGUE OF CEDAR RAPIDS

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IMPACT COMMITTEE:

Angel Burns, VP of Communications; Caitlin Ward, Michelle Scheiss, Jennifer Slaymaker, Katie Curtis, Jessica Cummings, Communications Members

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.

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SAVE THE DATE!

Fostering Strength 2019

Tuesday, April 30th

Doubletree by Hilton downtown CR



A member of The Association
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