

## 2015 Fall ODI Recap By: Melanie Oeltjenbruns



ODI is one of those notorious acronyms of Junior League. Organizational Development Institute – quite the mouthful! Heather Butterfield and I were given the opportunity to head to Seattle for 3 days and join 200 plus women from 72 different leagues to partake in the fall conference. What is included in one of these weekends? Learning, network-

ing, and a lot of league love! While my breakout tract was specifically focused on achieving community impact, I had a couple broad takeaways that reshaped how I look at myself and our league back in Cedar Rapids.

While listening to Junior League's back-story about the founder, Mary Harriman, I became aware of its long, rich history. However, the history did not stop with "and that's where we are today"—the history is still in progress! I cannot tell you how refreshing it is to see that our organization is continually evolving and changing. Something Vicki Clark, JLCR speaker, stated over and over was that Junior League is about the women. We discussed some changes League has been making since 2014 called "The Transformation." Our leaders surveyed members, took feedback, and owned the task of continually meeting us women where we are at and staying true to League's mission.

Sometimes it's easy to forget that League is built on so many different types of women. We all come from different backgrounds with different skills, talents, passions. Being in a room full of JL members from across the country, you are reminded change-makers can be anyone. It was fitting then that Clark presented a session titled "Moving Toward Diversity, Inclusion, and Cultural Competence". She had members complete a personal reflection assessment to ask questions about where we are at on a personal level.

I was encouraged to hear the conversation open up from viewing diversity and inclusion as a passive idea to a proactive strategy. I realized I had never thought about our Cedar Rapids League's diversity; never thought about being intentional with inclusion. We can be so much more creative and productive with a variety of women. And fun fact for you, thanks to a couple of our very own JLCR members, Junior League now has an official statement of Inclusion and Diversity: "The Junior League welcomes all women who value our Mission. We are committed to inclusive environments of diverse individuals, organizations and communities." ALL women.

I know we as the Junior League of Cedar Rapids will continue to evaluate our members and determine where we need to go. I cannot wait to see what women continue to join and how they shape us. The Junior League history is filled with ladies who were strong, a tad bit rebellious and not satisfied with the status quo. I love our community impact and what we physically are doing in the Cedar Rapids community. However, through ODI, I have also come to love that we are an organization taking all women, and through the development of these women we are an organization continually changing for the better.



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## President's Letter: Celebrating and Giving Thanks

The 2015-2016 Junior League of Cedar Rapids year is upon us and in full swing. To say our membership has been busy would be an understatement!

In September we formally launched our new volunteer management system, Digital Cheetah, in tandem with a website redesign. An ad-hoc team dedicated hours upon hours of their time and talents to set-up, design and implement the transition to the new system. If you haven't logged in yet to check it out – please do, we're certain you'll appreciate it!

Bridging the G.A.P. continues to be an immensely successful program. As the scope of the program continues to grow, we're seeing an increase in the number of donors to support the continued delivery. To date for the current JLCR year, we've received over \$28,000 in donations specifically to support the Bridging the G.A.P. project – this support speaks volumes towards the need and understanding of how important our project services are to the foster youth we serve.

All of these wonderful happenings this year would not be possible if it weren't for our outstanding members. Our ladies give of their time, talents and funds to ensure we continue moving forward in fulfilling our mission. Please take a moment to celebrate our members, all that our organization has accomplished within our communities and the impact we have on one another. As the season of giving thanks approaches, can you think of a fellow member who made a positive impact in your life? Whether it's a mentor who helped you navigate a career change, a friend who held your hand through a major life event or a new acquaintance you were so thankful to enjoy coffee with and get to know. Send a letter, an e-mail, make a call and tell this person how much you appreciate them. Our members are the backbone of JLCR's success and existence – we are here to support one another and improve our communities. For all of our JLCR members, I am thankful.

Best,

Tara DeWolf  
2015-2016 JLCR President



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## AJLI Fall Leadership Conference



President Elect/VP, Planning Abbie Covenah and VP, Community Christina Clements attended AJLI's Fall Leadership Conference in New Orleans September 17-19. Here are their reflections on the trip. Be sure to visit <http://juniorleaguecr.org/> for more great articles!

### Abbie

At the AJLI Fall Conference we met 351 delegates from 188 Leagues. It was so much fun to network and fellowship with League leaders from all over the country.

A common theme for AJLI right now is data. More specifically, how we use data to impact our membership, fundraising, and community impact decisions. There is also continued focus on diversity and the new reaching out statement that was approved at the last annual meeting this past summer. This emphasis is particularly special for us because our very own Maria Sanchez-Masi was part of the committee that crafted the statement. It states that, "The Junior League welcomes all women who value our Mission. We are committed to inclusive environments of diverse individuals, organizations, and communities." In addition to rolling out some new diversity and inclusion resources for Leagues, there was an incredibly powerful plenary session

about how the Junior Leagues of Baltimore, Charleston, and St. Louis responded to the recent racially-motivated violence in their cities. The discussion was moderated by Vicki Clark and was recorded. AJLI is promising to have the video available soon so that we can share it with our Leagues.

As always, Vicki Clark was amazing. I am so excited that we have the opportunity to send more members to hear her speak in November. A sample of some sage advice from Vicki, "leaders must create an environment that embraces change not as a threat, but as an opportunity." Christina's favorite Vicki quote was, "your recruitment line should not be, Join League and go insane."

The most amazing part of this conference was that we had the opportunity to be presenters. We were part of a three league session where we presented overviews of our community impact work with 12 slides in 12 minutes. After the presentation, the president from the Junior League of Lancaster, PA came up and hugged us and thanked us and our League for our amazing project. I had briefly spoken with this woman at the last conference and she was so inspired by our work, her league is using our Bridging the G.A.P. framework to inspire their own work with foster teens.

Of course, it was not all work and no play. We thoroughly shopped New Orleans, went to a Dierks Bentley concert outside of the Superdome, sang karaoke and danced the night away on Bourbon Street with the IA and IL Leagues, and ate some fantastic food.

### Christina

This experience was remarkable. I had the opportunity to hear Vicki Clark speak twice. She started her time management session by reiterating that we still have the same 24 hours we've al-

ways had, but we're pulled in a lot more directions, and have a lot more choices. A statement that really resonated with me was that women view it as a badge of honor to busy. She also talked about "planned abandonment" and realizing and accepting that we aren't going to get everything done in a year, and that we need to give ourselves, and our members, grace.

The plenary session with the League presidents from St. Louis, Baltimore, and Charleston was so impactful. What I really took away from this was that St. Louis and Baltimore were faced with something horrible, and looking back, they would've handled it differently. The fact that they didn't make excuses, or blame others, but took responsibility of their actions made me proud to be in League.

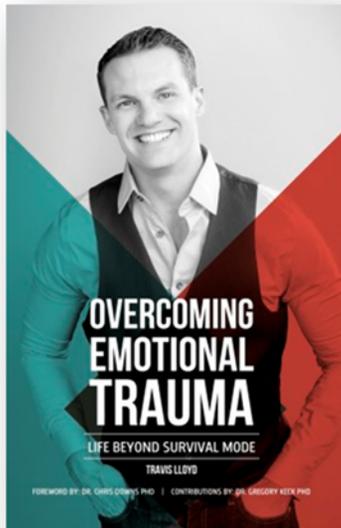
The president of the NOLA League during Hurricane Katrina, Liz Creel, interviewed JL Sustainers Ruthie Frierson and Anne Milling. Milling got together a group of 130 women, from diverse backgrounds that represented NOLA's population. They created Women Of The Storm, which educated them, and then made a plan of action. They chartered a plane, and flew to DC, and knocked on the door of every Senator and Representative, inviting them to NOLA to see the impact Katrina had. Wow! Frierson founded Citizens for One, which petitioned to create a non-partisan board to improve the levees. And then they took that a step further and drastically improved the NOLA school system. And they both attributed the training they had in League to their success. Talk about impactful!

We ended the event at Mardi Gras world, where I got the opportunity to network with the Leagues in Louisville and Cincinnati as well.

Truly empowering.

## Butterfly Kisses: Save the date!

The 14th Annual Butterfly Kisses Father Daughter Dance will be held on January 31, 2016 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at the Kirkwood Hotel. We are in the process of securing sponsorship and vendors. Please mark your calendars and start spreading the word! This event is guaranteed to provide some great memories!



## Fostering Strength

Travis Lloyd is a mental health professional speaker, hip-hop artist, foster care expert and mentor. He has spoken to our AMP youth at Future Fest in the past, and was incredibly motivational. There are several exciting changes this year!

**New location:** Double Tree Hotel downtown Cedar Rapids.

**New time:** Luncheon.

**New Format:** A craft market will replace the auction.

Do you make a unique item that we could sell? Would you be willing to donate it? Do you know of someone who makes unique items? Even if you don't know how to make it, but have an idea please contact Molly Mulholland (mulholland.mollymo@gmail.com) or Jenny Skogman (jennifer.f.minogue@gmail.com).

## Project News

The JLCR is proud to announce that beginning this fall we will award scholarships to local foster youth in need. The JLCR Scholarship Fund is designed to help those currently within, or having recently aged out of, the foster care system afford items they need assistance financing. Items can range from sporting gear for team sports, replacement of books lost during the transition between foster homes, money for gas, or basic household items. Religiously affiliated activities will also be considered.

Each individual is eligible to request the JLCR Scholarship twice in one year (June 2015-May 2016). Funding decisions will be made within two weeks of receipt of the application. JLCR will award up to \$200.00 per individual. Larger requests due to financial hardship will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Cash will not be distributed to scholarship recipients. Scholarships will be awarded in the form of gift cards or monies will be paid directly to debtors. For more information, visit the website: juniorleaguecr.org.

## Operations News

The Operations Council plays an integral role in JLCR related to maintaining League operations. As part of our board meeting review of the monthly financial statements, we have also implemented a new board dashboard report. The dashboard focuses on highlighting key financial statistics for the month along with project statistics as well. The board uses this information to see quickly see trends related to cash flow management and the impact Bridging the G.A.P is having on the community. During the first quarter of the JLCR year, we were chosen as the recipients of several grants. These grants are instrumental in continuing to develop and expand our project. A special thank you to everyone who assisted in applying for the grants.



Project Advocate hosted an AMP art project at the Dreaming Bear on November to tell stories that our community can see in an effort to keep helping those in foster care and recruiting foster parents.

## Summer/Fall DIADs

### **July DIAD: Downtown Farmers Market**

JLCR members Tori Owens and Christine Young volunteered to man the information table at the Downtown Farmers Market Summer DIAD.

(Pictured: top, left)

### **August DIAD: Food Pantry**

A small group of women in the Vinton-Shellsburg community coordinate a mobile food pantry in Benton County each month. Families can only receive assistance from the Benton County food pantry in Vinton up to 3 times per year and it is by appointment only. JLCR members donated items at the August GMM and made a difference in the lives of these recipients. One mom with 3 kids came through and had no food to get her & her kids through the week. (Pictured: middle, left)

### **September DIAD: Women Build**

On Saturday September 19, 2015, nine JLCR members utilized prior and newly acquired construction skills for Cedar Valley Habitat for Humanity Women Build. Member Ashley Vanorny was motivated to volunteer to improve not only her community but her neighborhood, as she lives near to the construction area, and is also doing odds-and-ends repair projects around her own home (she looked like a pro!). (Pictured: bottom, left)

### **September DIAD: No Foot Too Small Benefit**

Kate O'Brien, Caitlin Mattes, and Brie Steffes volunteered at the 2nd annual No Foot Too Small Benefit on September 24th, with proceeds going to the March of Dimes. The event celebrated babies fought for and lost, communicated the reality of infant mortality, and helped fund critical research to cure the abnormalities that threaten healthy pregnancies every day.

(Pictured: top, right)

### **October DIAD: YPN Fall Family Fun Fest**

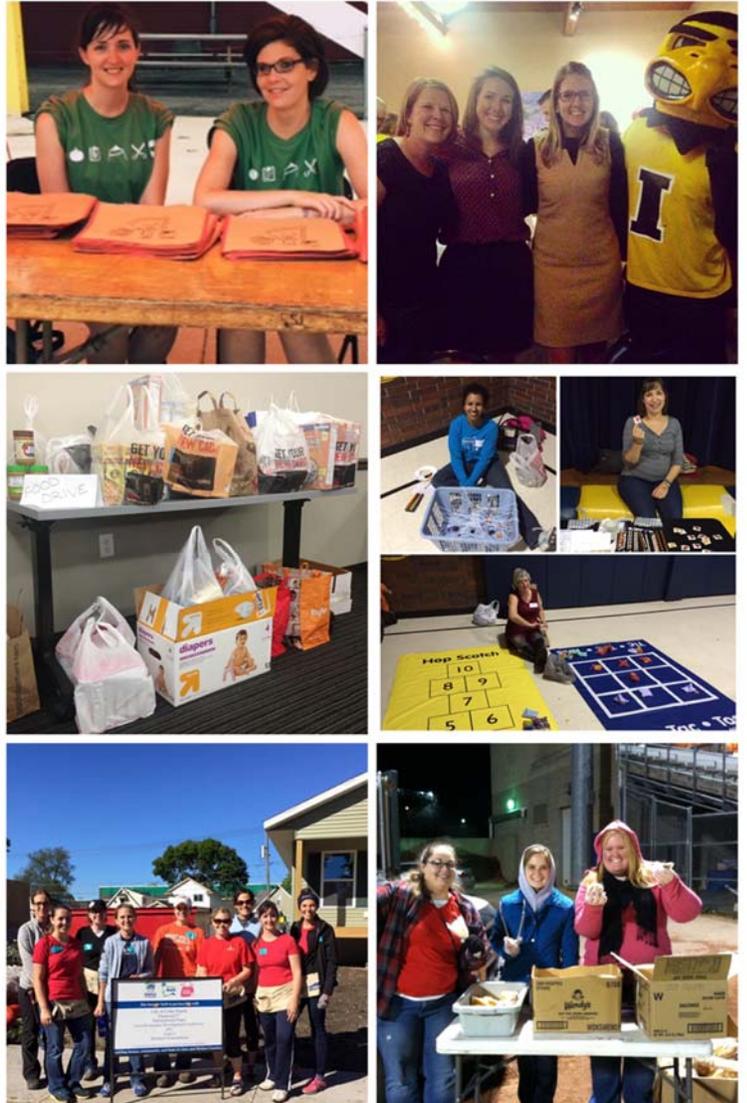
Fun was had by all at the Young Parents Network Fall Family Fun Fest. Seven Junior League members volunteered for the event. YPN had a great turn out of families. JLCR members assisted with various activities at the event, including a spider web game, trick or treat bag decorating, face tattoos and other fun activities to keep the children entertained. The children came dressed in costume and volunteers were able to give them treats at various stations. JLCR members had a blast interacting with the children and their parents as they made their way to each activity.

(Pictured: middle, right)

### **November DIAD: Sleep Out For the Homeless**

JLCR members Angel Burns, Christina Clements, and Adriane Moline volunteered to hand out food at Linn County's Sleep Out for the Homeless event.

(Pictured: bottom, right)



Done in a Day projects allow JLCR to support area non-profits by offering short-term volunteer services. As the name implies, the projects are done in one day, with the goal of making an impact on several parts of the community.



## Member Spotlight



**Name:** Meganne Lamprecht

**Years in League:** This is my first full year as an active member.

**Which committee are you on this year?** Butterfly Kisses.

**What are some of your favorite things to do in the Cedar Rapids metro area?** My husband and I recently started riding our bikes on the trails and love it! We also enjoy attending the farmers market during the summer, catching shows at Theatre Cedar Rapids, and searching out good happy hours.

**Favorite book and/or favorite food?** Pad Thai.

**Please share some details of your family life (i.e. spouse, children, pets, etc.)** My husband Evan and I moved to Cedar Rapids in April 2014 when we were both hired by OPN Architects. Evan is an architect from Nebraska and I am an interior designer from Kansas; we met during college

when studying architecture at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. We currently do not have any children, but a dog may be in our near future. When we are not working or traveling, we are most likely renovating our home! Evan and I purchased a house on the south-east side of Cedar Rapids when we moved to town and have enjoyed making it our own home.

**What has been your favorite JLCR memory thus far?** My favorite JLCR memory thus far is the Fostering Strength event held this year. I was added to the committee a few months before the event as an incoming JLCR member, so it was my first real experience being on a planning committee. It was amazing to see all of the hard work come to life!

## WINTER BIRTHDAYS

### November

Chelsea Archibald 2  
Megan Moran 2  
Heather Butterfield  
Angel Burns 14  
Renee Garbe 17  
Kristie VanGorkom 17  
Maxine Webb 19  
Emily Reiter 24  
Jennifer Rigdon 31

### December

Lijun Chadima  
Kiran Sood  
Jessica Netolicky  
Jen Byers  
Cindy Adkins  
Amber Blomme  
Kelli Holubeck  
Kelli DeVries  
Brandy Feldman  
LaShonda Kennedy  
Anne Adam

### February

Nicole Ridge 11  
Meagan Laraway 12  
Jodie Carlson 21  
Jessica Mizaur 25  
Heidi Landsgard 29



## AWARENESS MONTHS

Here are some key Awareness Months of interest to Junior League members. We will be trying to tie some of our activities to each month's focus if we can; this year's Fostering Strength event was well-timed for May, National Foster Care Month. Keep these in mind for added impact as your committee makes their plans for the year:

**January:**

Poverty in America Month (the cycle of poverty can be a key factor in why kids end up in foster care.)

**March:**

Women's History Month

**May:**

National Foster Care Month  
5/1: National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy



## New Member Class 2015-2016

JLCR hosted 41 new members on this year's Welcome Night, held on August 18<sup>th</sup>. Since then, that number has grown even more! Along with Welcome Night, we hosted prospective members at various socials throughout the summer, and chatted with quite a few ladies at Meet Me at the Market in July. The New Member retreat was held on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. These events have allowed us to stay connected with potentials, and help keep them engaged ahead of the New Year. The feedback we have received from potential new members has been very positive, and all seem very excited about the upcoming year!



Be a star this holiday season and make a difference  
in our community!

Join the Junior League of Cedar Rapids  
for our 3rd Annual Holiday Bazaar

*Shop for all your holiday gifts from over 30 booths of local vendors!!  
All proceeds and donations will support JLCR's projects with Partnership for  
Safe Families*

*Bring a toy in support of Waypoint's Fire and Ice toy drive!*



**Saturday, December 5, 2015**  
**11 am- 3 pm**  
**WayPoint**  
**318 5th St SE**  
**Cedar Rapids, IA 52401**

[www.jlcr.org](http://www.jlcr.org)

## Project Guide—AMP



We are off to another great start this year in providing fun, nutritious meals for the kids in AMP! Meetings began in July and have ranged from picnic food to pasta and sloppy joes! They are so thankful for us providing these meals and have devoured the meals, sometimes literally to the last bite!

We are still looking for members to provide meals, education and social interaction with this great group of foster teens. Meetings take place at 6:30 pm on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at the Four Oaks Bridge (2100 1<sup>st</sup> Ave NE). Project hours are available in a variety of ways.

- Attend a meeting – get a chance to meet some of the AMP youth and see what AMP is all about (1-2 hours).
- Head chef – Provide a recipe, shop for groceries and work with other JLCR members to cook the meal. 3 hours (we will even provide a recipe for you if you like).
- Cooking a meal (2 hours)
- Provide a Life Lesson - (1 hour). Share you knowledge and expertise. Give a short, 10-15 minute presentation focused on a particular skill set or career. Anything from Marketing 101 to How to do shop on a budget. This does not need to be College class material. Have fun with it and teach the kids something. They are eager to learn and soak up your wisdom.

Click on the link below for more information on times/ dates and to sign up for a meeting. Any questions or concerns? Feel free to contact Guide chair Nicole Ridge [nicolesridge@gmail.com](mailto:nicolesridge@gmail.com) (319-350-0010). <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090a4aaaa72ca57-plancook>



**Buddy program** – After much discussion as to how to move forward with the buddy program VP of Community Christina Clements has worked with Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) and other community organizations to create a task force to build this program through BBBS. They have the background and knowledge to develop it. They also have the resources to overcome many of the hurdles JLCR has encountered (Transportation, Legal liability, paperwork etc.) Details are still being worked out but the hope is that by years end JLCR members and anyone in the community can begin to mentor these kids similarly to the current BBBS program. Applications for both teens and mentors are being developed and will be available for JLCR members soon.

**Book club and beyond** - With the Buddy program transitioning to BBS and AMP meetings seeing such great support from our membership the Guide committee is looking to expand on our interaction with AMP youth. Several ideas are being considered including book club sessions, JLCR / AMP outings (pizza and a movie), JLCR/ AMP volunteer opportunities and more. Look for more information on these great opportunities coming soon! The hope is to provide more social ways for AMP and JLCR members to interact and provide fun, educational opportunities for the teens.



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**IMPACT COMMITTEE:**

LaShonda Kennedy, VP of  
 Communications; Caitlin  
 Mattes, Internal Relations  
 Chair; Jessica Witt, Asst.  
 Internal Relations Chair;  
 Mandie Kendzora, Internal  
 Relations Member

**JLCR CALENDAR**

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.

**December 2015**

- 12/1: Board Meeting, HSC, 6:00. p.m.
- 12/3: AMP Meeting, Four Oaks  
 Bridge, 5:30 p.m.
- 12/5: New Member Holiday Bazaar,  
 Waypoint, 11:00 a.m.
- 12/12: FHF Holiday Party, 3:30 p.m.
- 12/15: Fostering Strength Book Club,  
 Biaggi's, 6:30 p.m.
- 12/17: AMP Meeting, Four Oaks  
 Bridge, 5:30 p.m.

**January 2016**

- 1/5: Board Meeting, HSC, 6:00. p.m.
- 1/7: AMP Meeting, Four Oaks  
 Bridge, 5:30 p.m.
- 1/9: Ugly Sweater Potluck Party, Squaw  
 Creek Prairie Oak Lodge, 6:00 p.m.
- 1/19 January GMM, HSC, 6:30 p.m.
- 1/21: AMP Meeting, Four Oaks  
 Bridge, 5:30 p.m.

**February 2016**

- 2/2: Board Meeting, HSC, 6:00. p.m.
- 2/4: AMP Meeting, Four Oaks  
 Bridge, 5:30 p.m.
- 2/16: February GMM, HSC, 6:30 p.m.
- 2/18: AMP Meeting, Four Oaks  
 Bridge, 5:30 p.m.