

AMP: “NEVER FORGET THAT YOU ARE IMPORTANT!”

In May, JLCR first-year Active Michelle Foley shared this story with her advisor Kristy Marxen and 2012-13 JLCR President Kristin Roberts after an AMP meeting. Those who know Michelle’s kind and generous spirit understand that this story was sent with the intention of simply sharing the mark AMP made on her life. The impact we can have on our AMP teens’ lives with just a few hours of our time is really astounding – and in return, the impact they can have on us is humbling.

I just got back from AMP and had to share this with you! Tonight was “Future Fest,” a night where the AMP teens drew a pretend career (with salary), and then went from station to station to talk about employment, budgeting and money management, college options, housing, JLCR’s suitcase project, and so much more. It was a really great event.



Michelle Foley

I was working at the employment table, and passing out money for salaries. There were probably 50 or so foster teens participating. About half were brand-new to AMP, and had never been to a meeting at the Bridge before.

Close to the end, a couple of girls came to my table. They seemed very sad. The both wanted to be nurses, so I gave them their salaries. As we finished, I said, “Always remember to keep dreaming, and never give up.” Both of them started to cry.

I felt so bad – I stood up and asked why they were so sad. One of the girls told me they are

both in shelter in Iowa City, have nothing, do not know where they will go next (they cannot go to foster care again), and they may both be sent to Bremwood. I told them that one of my daughters is a counselor at Bremwood in Waverly, and gave them each a hug.

Their advisor came over and asked what was happening, and I told him we were having a girlfriend group hug. As they walked away, I had a hole in my stomach. I felt so helpless for these girls – as an adult, I wanted to fix their issues, but the system is so complicated.

Later, I asked the advisor how many teens he’d brought to Future Fest from Iowa City. He had four girls with him. I asked if I could give them each a gift, and ran out to my car. I pulled out four Mary Kay lip glosses and put a little note inside that said, “Never forget that YOU are important! Always pray and dream and never give up.”

After Future Fest ended, the advisor took the girls into an upper hallway at the Four Oaks Bridge, and told them I had a gift for each of them. They all started to cry when I gave them the lip gloss, and they thanked me. We all hugged.

It was as if no one had ever done anything nice for them before. It broke my heart.

I asked the advisor if they would have time to stop for a treat on the way home, and gave him money for ice cream. He thought it was such a generous gift. I told him it was simply my Mary Kay training: We give back. And it was part of my Junior League training: We work together to give back to the community, and to make life better, one woman at a time.

My cup is so full tonight. Even though I was the one giving, I received so much more.

President's Letter: "Back into action!"

Fall brings the kids back to school, the leaves to the ground, and Junior League back into action! We never truly take the summer off, but we do spend much-needed time regrouping and planning (and hopefully squeezing in a vacation or two!).

During those "quiet" months, we donated \$2,000 to Families Helping Families to provide much-needed school supplies for teens, including much-needed graphing calculators. Members got to volunteer at Families Helping Families' Back to School rally, which was a great way to spend the morning. School supply lists have certainly changed – kids these days need USB drives in grade school! We cooked for foster teens all summer too at Foundation 2's AMP (Achieving Maximum Potential) meetings.

You might have seen JLCR red out in the community too. We participated in the Freedom Festival and at the Blue Zones project "Meet Me at the Market" down at NewBo City Market. Or, maybe you came to the grand opening of LOFT in Cedar Rapids, where 10% of the total sales during the party were donated to us (they sent us a check for \$850!). We've been at fundraising trainings, training other leagues at AJLI's Fall Leadership Conference, and had four members honored at the Corridor Business Journal's 40 Under Forty event.

Now that we're firmly into the League year, we are gearing up for ongoing work with our Bridging the G.A.P. project, with new additions including a pilot "buddy" program and identifying ways to support foster families. We're incredibly grateful to the Transamerica Foundation for supporting our project this year! Our fundraiser dates are set: mark your calendars for Butterfly Kisses (March 9) and Fostering Strength (May 17), because they will both be incredible!

As we approach our 80th Anniversary in 2014, I want to take the time to thank each one of you for your sustained commitment to League over the years. Junior League of Cedar Rapids continues to be a powerful organization thanks to your involvement, and I am grateful for you!



Out in the community: League members joined President Maria Sanchez-Masi (r far right) to help out at a Habitat for Humanity Women Build event.

Blogging JLCR



President Maria Sanchez-Masi and President-Elect Molly Baynes attended AJLI's Fall Leadership Conference in Detroit Sept. 19-21. Here are Molly's reflections on the trip – it's great to hear JLCR rocks! Be sure to visit <http://juniorleaguecr.org/> for more great articles.

After spending last weekend at the Association of Junior Leagues International's Fall Leadership Conference, I realize how far ahead JLCR is in several areas. Large and established Leagues were asking us for details on some of our initiatives. In addition to the small and large group discussions, we were stopped during breaks (*I was trapped in the bathroom by an enthusiastic Texan for a good 20 minutes*) and cornered at social events by women who wondered about ideas they'd heard JLCR is implementing. My focus at the conference was Membership, Community, and Finance (*but we still love Communications, Planning, and Administration!*). I am truly proud to be a member of a relatively small league that is progressive in so many areas.

Membership – JLCR was selected to present our Career Development program during a Membership

showcase. The showcase was the most popular of any session throughout the weekend, with over 120 women from all over the country in attendance. Two other Leagues highlighted their chapter's work with new members and sustainers. Although our focus was Personal Development Plans and Core Competencies, other topics came up for discussion. Women from other Leagues were generally impressed with our flexible options for our members. Some had never even heard of "Advisory Active" status or considered things like "Name Your Hours" or Exception Requests.

I had several requests for copies of training presentations, including our summer leadership meetings and advisor training. We also heard from Leagues where the Education & Training functions only went as far as social "training" such as wine tastings (*not that there's anything wrong with that*) or craft classes. These women were very eager to talk to us about a more meaningful training experience for their members.

I had several women ask for our new member class schedule. New member classes ranged from very high intensity (*one woman referred to hers as "hazing" – yikes!*) to very hands-off. Very few people in the discussion had considered having their Provisionals included in DIADs or project work, and even fewer had half year classes with activation in January. Most agreed that it's a much better way to keep new members invested in League, and gets them involved in leadership positions earlier.

Our nominating process, including the interviews, is much more robust than that of other Leagues. I talked to a woman who was selected as PE without applying or interviewing. She was invited to a meeting with the current president and presented with flowers and asked to accept the position. She joked that it reminded her of an episode of "The Bachelor."

Community – Listening to the discussion about Issue-Based Community Impact made me realize how far along we are. Some Leagues larger and older than ours picked projects without any research or thought to strategic community partners. We listened to women talk about failed projects that had no membership support. The work that our Project Research Chairs do is valuable beyond what we may realize.

Finance – This year, JLCR has a great Finance VP that has taken on several initiatives to eliminate risk and waste. The larger Leagues had already outsourced accounting or had paid staff members to carry out those functions, but most Leagues our size had never considered this. Most Leagues did not have someone reviewing contracts to find savings, since items were already in the budget.

One of the greatest things I saw was how excited other Leagues were about our upcoming fundraiser. Many Leagues have galas as fundraisers, but few have high-profile speakers or such a clear tie to their project. Several women from other Midwest Leagues have promised to attend and pass our information on to the rest of their

FOSTERING STRENGTH

The first annual Fostering Strength event was held on May 30, 2013 and was a wonderful success. Vanessa Diffenbaugh, author of *The Language of Flowers*, spoke about her book, how she became a foster parent, and the Camellia Network which she co-founded with a friend. The pre-event reception with the sustainers and donors was a great success and they received a private message from Vanessa. A huge thanks goes out to the committee for all the hard work, time, and energy that was put into this first time event. Thank you to Maria Sanchez-Masi and Tara DeWolf for stepping in and helping out.



Members of the Fostering Strength committee met with Vanessa Diffenbaugh, author of the Language of Flowers at the Fostering Strength event. From left to right: Brooke Zudsky, Darline Davermann-Reid, Joanna Hein, Sally Sandberg, Vanessa Diffenbaugh, Jessica Netolicky, Caitlin Weidenheft, and Katie Schroeder.

PROVIDE COMMITTEE

In addition to providing suitcases to foster youth, JLCR participated in a school supply drive for Families Helping Families this fall. Due to short turn around time in which they needed supplies and JLCR not quite knowing what their needs would be- JLCR made a donation of \$2000. The Back to School Rally helped more than 280 children and youth. With the money that JLCR provided they were able to purchase the following:

- Kleenex - 8 large multi packs (some children needed 6 boxes each)
- Hand sanitizers (individual) - 100
- Trappers -35
- Binders - 100
- Highlighters - 40 2 packs
- Erasers - 250
- Dry Erase markers - 50
- Pencil Sharpeners - 100
- Folders - 300
- Binder w/pouch - 200
- Pens - 300
- Book Covers - 50
- Colors/colored pencils - 100
- Pencil boxes – 50

Families Helping Families also had requests for 11 TI scientific and graphing calculator costing around \$90 each. They were able to purchase all of those calculators with our donation. Julie Facion, Manager of Programs & Services for Families Helping Families of Iowa said, “We hope to partner with JLCR on a future project...what a wonderful group of caring professional women! “

2012-2013 STANDING OVATION AWARDS

The 2012–2013 Annual Meeting was held at the Cedar Rapids Country Club on Tuesday, May 21. The following Standing Ovation awards were presented by Cindy Adkins, Awards Committee Chair. Other members of the 2012–2013 Awards Selection Committee were Nicole Ridge and Heather Sayasit.

UNSUNG HERO AWARD: JESSICA CUMMINGS

An Active or New Member not currently serving as a committee chair or board member is eligible for this award. The award is presented to someone whose participation has had great impact on JLCR, through encouragement, participation, and support. This recipient shows willingness to step up to the plate on short notice and go beyond the call of duty to get things done.

SPIRIT AWARD: LAURIE WAHLERT

The recipient of this award embodies the spirit of League voluntarism in her actions and interactions within the community, and with JLCR members. This person consistently inspires others with her caring, understanding, enthusiasm, and pursuit of excellence while embracing JLCR's values.

LEADERSHIP AWARD: LIZ WARDINSKI

The Leadership Award is presented to a member of League who motivates, inspires, and leads others to

further the vision of the organization through her League placement. This member is someone who has had a meaningful impact on other League members and uses her talents to mentor and train other League members.

WHEELS IN MOTION: LINDSAY PRINCE

The Wheels in Motion Award goes to a member who deserves special recognition for her dedication of time, effort, creativity, and leadership, and who has contributed in a special way to one of our fundraisers, marketing endeavors, current projects, or Done in a Day events. This person's efforts symbolize the "Wheels in Motion" that help drive JLCR's focus.

SUSTAINER OF THE YEAR: PAT CARGIN

This award is presented to honor the sustaining member who has made outstanding contributions to League and/or the community. This year's recipient has fulfilled JLCR's mission by maintaining an active role in League throughout the past year.

YOU NAME IT AWARD: NATALIE DITMARS

This new award category was created this year for an Active or New Member who deserves special recognition for her contributions to JLCR that do not fit in any of the categories above. Ditmars was nominated for putting "Ideas into Action" for her contributions to the Community Council.

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP TO JUNIOR LEAGUE OF CEDAR RAPIDS:

This award is presented to an individual, business, or association in the Corridor area whose involvement and contributions to the efforts of Junior League of Cedar Rapids during the past League year have been so outstanding that they should be recognized by honorary membership in our organization. This year's Honorary Membership was presented to Rachelle DuVall from Foundation 2, who has played a major and highly visible role in building a partnership with the Community Council.



Award winners (l-r): Lindsay Prince, Rachelle DuVall, Liz Wardinski, Jessica Cummings, Natalie Ditmars, Brooke Zudsky, and Laurie Wahlert

Member Spotlight

Name: Caitlin Wiedenheft

Years in League: 1

Current residence: Cedar Rapids

Hometown: Cedar Rapids

Where'd you go to school?

Linn-Mar High School, University of Northern Iowa

2013-14 Placement: Social Media Chair/External Relations

Favorite placement: So far, I've only been in one placement -

Social Media Chair and I've already really found it to help my success in my career.

I joined Junior League because... I was new into town and wanted to meet friends outside of work. And now only a year in, I've meet so many wonderful women and been able to carry some skills I've learn through Junior League to my job.

I stay in Junior League because... I want to continue to

meet wonderful women and close friends

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

1) I'm a marathon finisher! 2) I'm a videographer/editor. 3) I am one of 29 grandkids on my mom's side.

What's your favorite quote?
"Life is not about perfection, it's about making process"

FALL/WINTER BIRTHDAYS

November

Stacy Long	7
Crystal Hardinger	16
Erika Tarango	21
Christina Clements	24
Joanna Hein	29

December

Catie Houck	1
Chelsea Archibald	2
Megan Moran	2
Kristie VanGorkom	17
Emily Ruden	24

January

Lijun Chadima	1
Jessica Netolicky	5
Jen Byers	7
Cindy Adkins	9
Kelli Holubeck	12
Keiaffa Green	29



You Can Help!

Do you belong to an organization or association that holds regional or national meetings or sporting events?

If so, the Cedar Rapids Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (CRACVB) wants to enlist your help in bringing your next convention, meeting or tournament to Cedar Rapids.

<http://www.cedar-rapids.com/partners/bringittocr.php>

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MEMBERSHIP RETENTION

The Membership Retention Committee is excited to begin the 2013-2014 year as a new committee combining three existing teams into one super committee. Membership Retention will take on the job of organizing Education and Training, Awards and Social with the goal of a more cohesive and exciting committee to meet the needs of the membership. Keep an out in the E-News for exciting E&Ts and Social activities and information on when to submit nominations for awards! If any member has suggestions for E&Ts or Social events please contact Liz Wardzinski at lizw@modern-dj.com



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.

November: National Adoption Month

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 1: National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

May: National Foster Care Month

STRATEGIC PLANNING

This year we are developing a new process for updating our strategic plan. In the past, this was created every three years. One of the problems with that approach is that it did not allow flexibility to make changes once the plan was complete. Our new plan will be a "rolling" plan that is updated every year. That way, if there are changes in our membership, community partners, or other factors, we don't have to wait three years to reflect those changes in the plan.

The first step will be to analyze strategic plans from other organizations, including other Junior League chapters and other nonprofits, and compare those to ours. We will then set goals of where we want to take JLCR over the next three years and determine strategies to meet those goals. Finally, we will develop performance measures or metrics so we will know when the goals have been met.

This process will likely take a few months, so councils will still need to establish goals for the 2013-2014 League year. The high level focus of the strategic plan will likely be community impact, financial stability, member satisfaction, and effective internal and external communication. Committees will develop their goals over the next several weeks. If you have any questions about the strategic planning process or goal development, please contact mollyk13@hotmail.com.

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Archibald, Member Relations;
Jen Slaymaker, Community
Relations; Kristie
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Caitlin Wiedenheft, External
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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.

JLCR CALENDAR

November 2013

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| 11/5: Board Meeting, HSC, 6:00. p.m. | 12/3: Board Meeting, HSC, 6:00. p.m. |
| 11/14: AMP Meeting, Four Oaks
Bridge, 5:30 p.m. | 12/7 DIAD, Bring Holiday to Ronald
McDonald House, 1-3 p.m. |
| 11/19: Relaxation Yoga, HSC,
5:30 p.m. | 12/12: AMP Meeting, Four Oaks
Bridge, 5:30 p.m. |
| 11/19: November GMM, HSC,
6:30 p.m. | 12/26: AMP Meeting, Four Oaks
Bridge, 5:30 p.m. |
| 11/28: AMP Meeting, Four Oaks
Bridge, 5:30 p.m. | |

December 2013

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|--|---|
| 12/3: Board Meeting, HSC, 6:00. p.m. | 1/7: Board Meeting, HSC, 6:00. p.m. |
| 12/7 DIAD, Bring Holiday to Ronald
McDonald House, 1-3 p.m. | 1/9: AMP Meeting, Four Oaks
Bridge, 5:30 p.m. |
| | 1/21: January GMM, HSC,
6:30 p.m. |
| | 1/23: AMP Meeting, Four Oaks
Bridge, 5:30 p.m. |

January 2013