

The Sandspur

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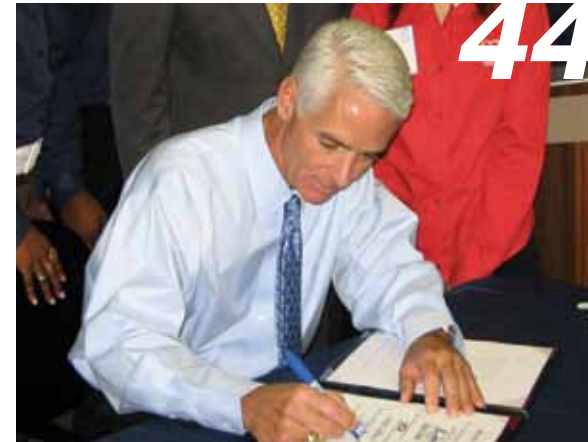
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Sulphur Springs Elementary students at Food 4 Kids event.





Charlie Crist, signing the "Independent Living Services Bill" at Connected by 25.

On the Cover

Sulphur Springs Elementary student learns to tie a tie at the Etiquette Event planned and executed by the JLT Provisional Class.

Photograph by
Luiza Torra of Torra Photography



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The Mission of The Junior League of Tampa

Founded in 1926, The Junior League of Tampa, Inc. is an organization of 1700 women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving communities through effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable.

Letter from the Editor



My husband, Ben, jokingly and initially by accident, refers to The Junior League of Tampa as The Justice League. I suppose this means to him, we are fighting for truth, justice and the American way? Ridding the world of all evil one villain at a time? In a way, I like to think that he is right. Our villains are things like poverty and illiteracy, and the Junior League Mission reaches further than just this country, but we do fight for those that need our help.

In this issue we recognize two of our greatest heroes, Sustainer of the Year Robbie Williams and Inspiring Leader of the Year Nicole Hubbard. It is the kind of dedicated voluntarism these women have demonstrated which has allowed JLT to expand our reach into new agencies in need in the Tampa Bay community. Contributing writer, Jennifer Simpson-Oliver will open our eyes to the detailed process of choosing these new projects and introduce us to two organizations we're excited to call "New Projects". Also, Sarah Hall will give us an update on one of our ongoing projects that took on a new look this year in her article, *The Junior League's Kids in the Kitchen*.

In her article *From Center to Circumference: The Provisional Project*, Cynthia Valdez will explain how our newest members were given the opportunity to work on smaller versions of some of the League's largest projects to make a difference in Sulphur Springs, an impoverished community less than eight miles from JLT Headquarters. While organizing this project, this year's provisional class was given the opportunity to revive a longstanding tradition of the JLT that has been on hiatus for several years. Strap on your seatbelt as Sommer Stiles takes you on a light-hearted and upbeat ride in *Making a Return: The Provisional Bus Tour*.

It is with pride and a sense of accomplishment that I write this letter for the Summer Issue. It was an honor to be your *Sandspur* Editor for the 2010-2011 year. As I pass the torch to Angier Miller, who will take the reins next year, I reflect on my remarkable committee. Due to their talent, dedication and enthusiasm, we have taken this magazine to a new level. My hope is that I have inspired them to continue to strive to new heights in their League career, as much as they have inspired me. Thank you to Denise Glass and her team at Sensory 5 for their endless creativity and to our advertisers for without your support this wouldn't be possible. Lastly, thank you to our fearless leaders, Betsy Graham and Lisa Lockhart. Your attention to detail and unwavering support never ceased to amaze me.

Thank you for this incredible opportunity! No matter what you are fighting for, my hope is that we have encouraged you to go out and save the day!

Sarah Kodadek
Editor
2010-2011

The Junior League of Tampa THE SANDSPUR 2010-2011

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President's Perspective

Improving Communities for 85 Years



"When my younger son came home to tell me about a presentation given by MORE HEALTH at school that day, my first question to him was not, "What did you learn about bones?" It was, "Do you know who founded MORE HEALTH 20 years ago?" By now, of course, he and his siblings have learned that the correct answer is almost always "The Junior League of Tampa!"

Wherever you go in the Tampa community, you find reminders of the impact The Junior League of Tampa has had on our community over the past 85 years. Representing JLT at a MacDonald Training Center dinner in October, I was proud to hear the current success stories of an organization in whose early years the League was so instrumental. Each year when I complete a SERVE form to volunteer for the League's Children's Literacy Project, I am reminded of JLT's role in SERVE's founding. I routinely drive by Baby Bungalow in South Tampa, never without a thought of our work with the Child Abuse Council to open Baby Bungalow in 2000. These organizations and many more are ongoing examples of the *improving communities* part of JLT's Mission.

I also am reminded regularly that it is through our trained volunteers, not merely our financial investments, that the League is so effective in making a difference in the community. In April, I attended a Mary Lee's House Fountain of Hope Auxiliary meeting. This newly formed volunteer auxiliary is not only led by Junior League Sustainers and includes many Sustainers among its members, but it also is basing some of its activities on components of the 2009-2010 Provisional Project in support of Mary Lee's House. At Mary Lee's House, our legacy of *effective action and leadership of trained volunteers* lives on.



The Junior League of Tampa exhibited in the Tampa Bay History Center Community Case in April in honor of our 85th Anniversary.

Recently, The Junior League of Tampa received recognition for its involvement in an important community partnership. On May 17th, the Eckerd Foundation presented a report to the community

on the outcomes of Connected by 25 Hillsborough. JLT was acknowledged for playing an important part in this public private partnership that has improved the lives of youth aging out of the foster care system. As we concluded our anniversary celebration, the County Commission recognized JLT on June 2nd with a commendation for our 85 years of service to the Tampa community.

Looking forward, our volunteers are evaluating community needs and membership interests to determine the future direction for our projects and focus areas. As in the past, success will come through collaboration and the League's ability to allocate volunteers and resources to an emerging need fairly quickly. For example, our 2010-2011 Provisional Project with the YMCA Community Learning Center at Sulphur Springs Elementary allowed our members to understand and address poverty-related issues in Sulphur Springs, a neighborhood receiving much attention from community agencies and funders.

Improving school readiness and giving parents the tools to enable them to play a critical role in their children's early development is another issue receiving attention in the community. To this end, JLT's Children's Literacy Project piloted an evening family literacy event in April with The Learning Center, an organization that offers adult and children's education programs, parenting classes and Parents and Children Together (PACT) activities. In addition to giving each participant a book in English and Spanish, our volunteers helped the parents understand the benefits of reading to children from an early age and gave tips on how to do so.

I hope that you have enjoyed reading our 85th Anniversary issues of *The Sandspur* as much as I have enjoyed working on them with the talented women of *The Sandspur* Committee, led by Editor Sarah Kodadek. I also want to recognize Denise Glass and her team at Sensory 5 for helping us produce a top quality magazine well within the budget provided by revenue from our many loyal advertisers.

Serving as Junior League of Tampa President has been a once in a lifetime opportunity, and I am grateful to my family, friends and fellow Executive Committee and Board members for their unwavering support throughout this year. I truly have enjoyed spending time with our members — Provisionals, Actives, and Sustainers — as we have worked together to build a better community. I also want to thank our Community Advisory Board members, community partners, and donors whose collaboration and support enable us to magnify the impact of our volunteer hours even further.

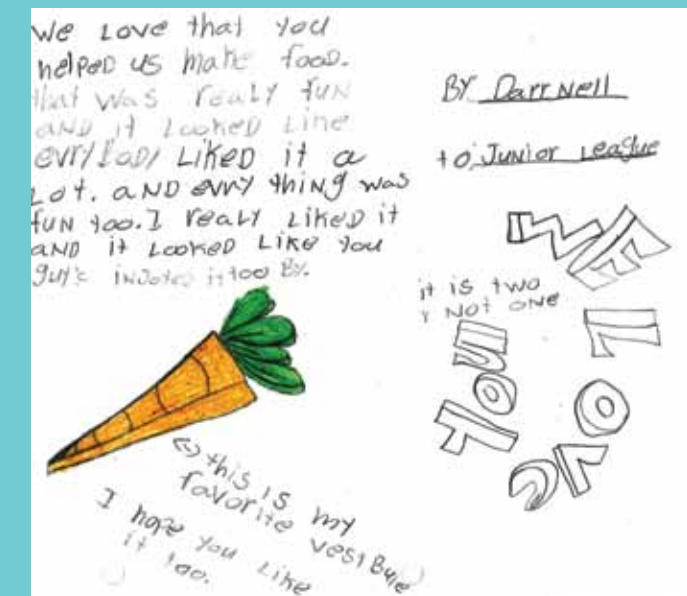
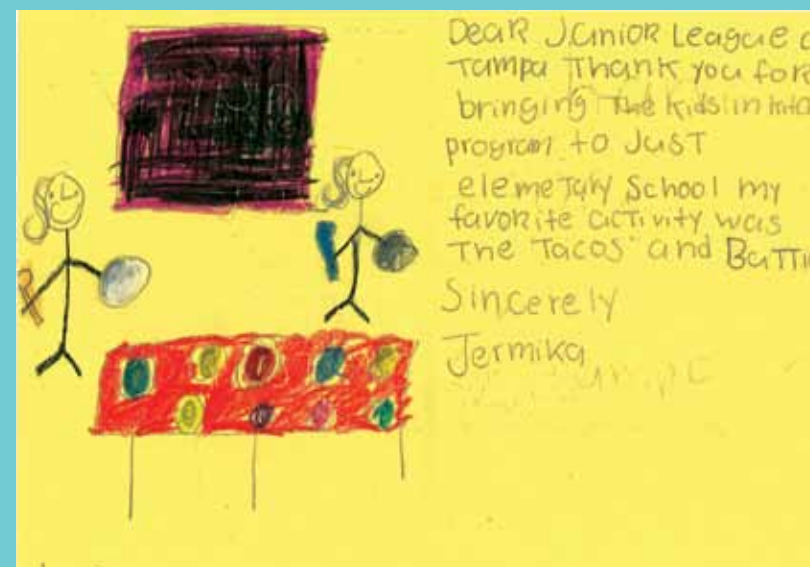
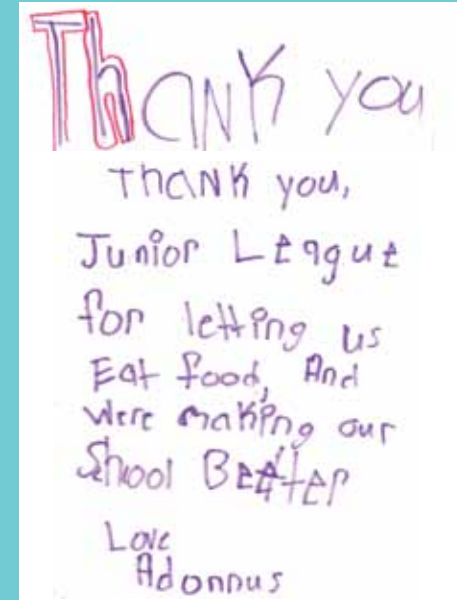
In closing, I have no doubt that current and future JLT members will continue to succeed in *improving communities through effective action and leadership of trained volunteers* for many years to come.

Best,

Betsy Graham

Betsy Graham
President, 2010-2011

dear Junior League of Tampa,



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This edition of The Sandspur includes a cumulative listing of gifts received from June 1, 2010 - March 31, 2011, the submission deadline for this issue. Gifts received after this date will be listed in the next edition of The Sandspur. If you have any corrections or additions for future lists, please contact Andrea Layne at andrea.layne@gmail.com.

The Junior League of Tampa Endowment Fund Leaving a Legacy...Sustaining our Service

A Special Thank You to The Founders Circle

We would like to recognize and thank the members of The Founders Circle who pledged \$5,000 or more towards The Fund as our celebration of The Junior League of Tampa's 85th Anniversary comes to a close. Your gift has given you the ability to Leave a Legacy that will allow the League to Sustain our Service and continue to make lasting impacts in our community and with future generations of women for the next 85 years and beyond.

Last Change to Support The Fund in honor of our 85th Anniversary!

The 2010-2011 year is coming to a close and what better way to honor our membership than to donate in honor of our 85th Anniversary. The Fund was established to support the long-term sustainability of the League and our charitable endeavors. Gifts made to The Fund are

not spent, but rather are permanently invested and managed by the Community Foundation of Tampa Bay. Now that we have closed The Founders Circle, our next step is to complete our Hike to Half a Million! Once the principal balance reaches \$500,000, a portion of the earnings generated will be used to further our Mission.


There are a variety of giving levels, beginning at \$250, and pledges may be paid over five years. Whatever your decision, the greatest impact is made the moment you decide to participate! For more information, please visit the donor page located on our website at www.JLTampa.org.

In addition to The Founders Circle, thank you to all of our Endowment Fund Donors!

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For more information, please visit the donor page located on our website at www.JLTampa.org.

Commemorative Gifts

A gift to the League's Commemorative Fund is a special way to honor a friend or family member's significant milestone or to remember a loved one. All commemorative contributions benefit the League's Endowment Fund.

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OTHER COMMEMORATIVE GIFTS

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*Those marked with an asterisk received earlier donations listed in the Winter 2010 or Spring 2011 editions of *The Sandspur*.

This edition of The Sandspur includes a cumulative listing of commemorative gifts received from January 8, 2011 to April 13, 2011. To make a contribution, visit the Support Us section of the JLT website at www.jltampa.org.

Vice President's Column: Our Community Impact

By Stephanie Wiendl
Community Vice President



Over the decades, The Junior League of Tampa has had an extraordinary impact on our community from helping children fight tuberculosis at the Pine Hill Preventorium in the 1930's to starting the MacDonald Training Center in the 1950's to initiating MORE HEALTH in 1989. Our focus on the "improving communities" part of our Mission continues today, and this past year was no exception. However, just as our lives move faster and change more quickly, so do the needs of our community.

While there is no doubt that The Junior League of Tampa has been impactful in our community, what has that impact been? And more importantly, what is it going to be? And why do we need to know? As Community Vice President, I have had the opportunity to take a look at the impact we have had and are having while leading a process to imagine what our community impact could look like in the future.

A quick scroll through the JLT website reveals the long standing impact we have had in our community over the past 85 years. In 1982, we won the Governor's Award for the Arts. In 1994, we won the Partnership Award for Civic Leadership from the Florida Center for Children and Youth. We have won the Governor's Point of Light Award and the President's Point of Light Award in 2005 and 2006, respectively. These are just a few of the highlighted community awards we have won in each of our three focus areas: Improving the lives of children in the foster care system, providing educational programs that promote literacy and offer cultural enrichment, and increasing access to basic needs services for disadvantaged children.

Glancing at our dashboard over the past three years will give you impressive information on our current community impact. Our Love Bundles Project, which provides age appropriate basic needs backpacks to virtually every child taken out of his or her home for abuse or neglect in Hillsborough County, has provided close to 4,000 Love Bundles to these needy and at-risk children since 2008. Our Children's Literacy Project has distributed more than 60,000 books to over 6,000 children in Title I schools in the last three years. Most of these children start the year with no books at home. Through our Food 4 Kids project, we provide food every other weekend to the children of the Wilbert Davis Boys and Girls Club, and next year we will be expanding to the Sulphur Springs Boys and Girls Club. In the past three years this has amounted to over 120,000 pounds of food being sent home to children and their families who otherwise would not have food on the weekends. Certainly, these are huge indications of fulfilling the "...improving communities through effective action and leadership of trained volunteers" portion of our Mission Statement, but are we moving the needle, and if so, how much? And why do we want to know this?

In today's environment we compete for our volunteers; we compete for our fundraising dollars and grant awards; and we strive to collaborate with community partners to be more efficient. In order to effectively compete and collaborate, we need to be focused on exactly what we are hoping to accomplish. Currently, our dedicated volunteers, working with a framework and support from the Association of Junior Leagues International (AJLI) are undertaking a process to map The Junior League of Tampa's community impact. This entails examining our focus areas through the lens of the community as well as our members to see if any change is needed. Next, we will take a deeper dive into each focus area and project in order to map out our desired outcomes and ultimate impact on the community.

So imagine being able to articulate as a JLT member that your placement is seeking to increase the successful transition to independent living of homeless families in shelters from 50% to 70%. Imagine JLT applying and being awarded for the first time a highly coveted grant because we now have an execution plan that will allow us to move the needle in early childhood literacy



Through the Food 4 Kids program these three girls are each taking home one bag of food to their families for the weekend.



The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Department started a tradition of giving coins to officers who go above and beyond for children. During a training meeting at the Sheriff's office, Major Robert Bullara presented Love Bundles Chair Jennifer Sober with a special coin for our Love Bundles project.

Engaged Volunteer + Impactful Community Project = *JLT Zen*
(the ultimate perfect balance) If you can see it, you can be it.

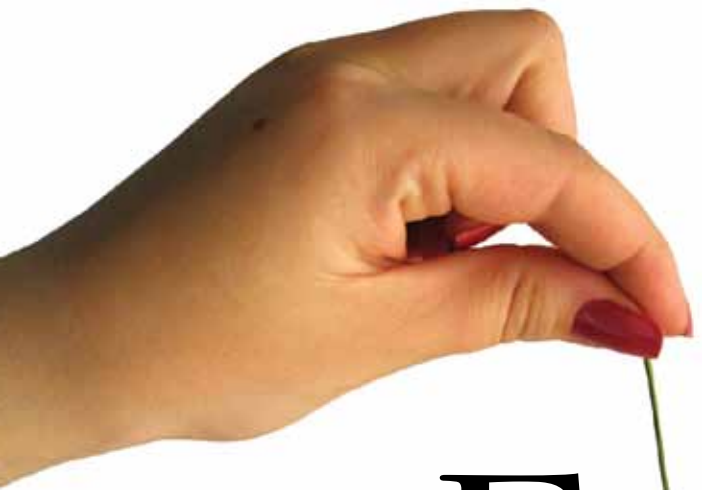
in a measured amount. And lastly, what if we can align ourselves with another organization trying to make the same meaningful impact on childhood hunger and together the sum of our efforts is greater than the whole? That's what it means to effectively collaborate.



Sarah Evans, Children's Literacy Chair, at James Elementary reading Sixteen Runaway Pumpkins to these kindergartners who were each given a copy of the book to keep.



Betsy Graham and Stephanie Wiendl with Tye Maner at the Kids Connect Event at Raymond James Stadium.



Food for

Thought

By Myrna Haag
Introduction by Cynthia Valdez

At any given time, The Junior League of Tampa has at least 10 major community projects in the oven that require the regular and fastidious attention of their various committee members. Additionally, there are several behind-the-scenes committees that not only ensure that these projects run smoothly, but that also ensure the League itself operates properly and efficiently. Much of this attention often follows a long work week, a hectic family schedule, and additional volunteer commitments. So it's not uncommon for League members to trade healthful meals for drive-thru quick fixes or to skip meals altogether, opting instead to drink their meal in the form of a sugar-laden latte or super-sized "diet" soda.

When meeting the needs of others becomes a priority in advance of meeting our own needs, we fail to perform at our

absolute best. Each and every one of our members is critical to the success of the League and thereby also to the successes of many underserved and underprivileged members of our community. So we are thrilled to present the following article, written by local fitness and nutrition expert Myrna Haag, which explains the importance of, and how to achieve, a balanced diet. Eating well doesn't just benefit your body, it benefits your community!

Is there something in food that leads us to eat foods that aren't good for us?

Studies show that even when people know food causes weight gain and contributes to poor health, they still consume it. This may be due to the fact that the taste of highly-processed food is intoxicating. These foods have been engineered to leave us wanting more. High-sugar and fatty foods have been referred to as a drug; a kind of legal sedative that brings immense pleasure

and helps us cope with stress. It is easy to become a victim of processed foods because of the addictive nature of these foods. This can throw us into a negative cycle; we crave food we feel guilty for eating, and then attempt unrealistic diets to justify our indulgence.

Is food addiction about a lack of education?

Because of the cravings we feel, studies confirm that nutritional education does not stop food addiction. Although nutritional education helps, it is no guarantee we will be able to say "no" to our favorite empty calorie indulgences.

The solution has little to do with restriction. Although this may work temporarily, we give in to our desires. This is a major reason why diets don't work. Education and will-power are no match for that little voice inside our head. Eventually, that will trump reason and will-power every time. Other

strategies such as exercise, meditation, and consultation all help, but until the body is satisfied there will always be an internal struggle. When the body is deprived it signals the brain, and we crave foods that are not always the best choice.

Finding a Balance

When cravings for junk food disappear, the struggle with weight gain becomes easier. In other words, you are empowered to make smart choices. It is hard to stay motivated to eat healthily if you are always struggling with a body that craves all the wrong foods. Once you learn how to keep nutritional balance, you are less likely to have a food addiction. When food addiction is gone, you may lose weight. You eat less and your desire for certain unhealthy foods change.

Finding the balance that your body needs isn't just a matter of taking a vitamin or commercial supplement. It is about an awareness of how the foods you are consuming affect your body chemistry. Eating a balanced diet is a lifestyle which requires an understanding of how food works, knowing the recommended amounts necessary and choosing the proper times to nourish the body for optimum performance.



Myrna Haag explaining the importance of hydration to Just Elementary students at a Kids in the Kitchen Event.

Many people restrict their carbohydrate consumption believing this is the answer to weight loss. Eating high-sugar carbohydrates can cause havoc, but not eating enough carbohydrates can lead to feelings of deprivation that can trigger out-of-control binge eating. According to the Government guidelines, the recommended daily allowance of carbohydrates is in the range of 45%-55% of your daily calories. This guideline can vary, and for competitive athletes can be as high as 60%-65%.

Ideally, the goal is to intuitively eat and not obsess over what you should or shouldn't eat. This happens naturally when you are nutritionally balanced. Unfortunately, when the body isn't balanced, as in the case when carbohydrates have been restricted, you set yourself up for food addictive behavior. The body craves the nutrients of which it is deprived, and this craving can turn into uncontrollable consumption of high- sugar and fatty foods. This leads to further imbalances such as blood sugar swings, weight gain, fatigue and poor health. The body needs balanced nutrients to keep you healthy, and clouded judgment from internal cues may lead to a short-term fix. Binge eating is the body's way of quickly resolving an imbalance you may have created.

Nutritionally balanced meals are created by eating whole foods that supply the proper amounts of protein, fibers, carbohydrates and good fats. The healthiest whole foods are high in fiber and come from natural sources such as beans, grains, fruits and vegetables. Fiber has been labeled as one of the single most important factors in fighting obesity. These foods are also positively correlated to a lower risk of heart disease and cancer.

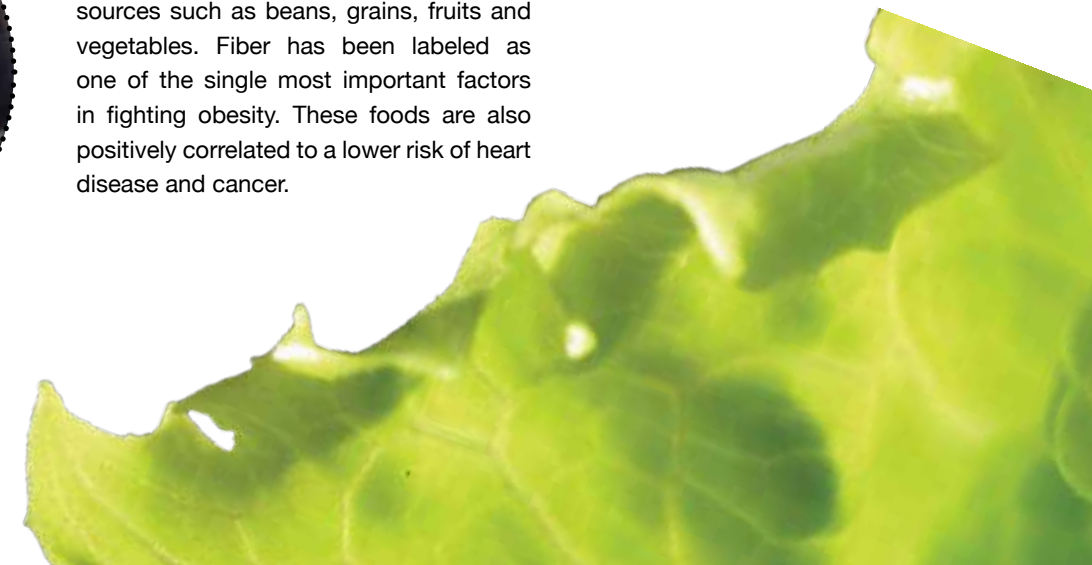


At the Kids in the Kitchen Kickoff at Sweetbay Supermarket, Myrna Haag gives healthy snack suggestions to League members and their families.

It is clear that food can be one of our best defenses, but can also be one of our worst enemies. Nutritionally balanced meals are central to a healthy, active lifestyle. I offer five-minute recipes that use whole foods, are budget conscience and, of course, super- healthy! You can find my You Tube recipe channel through my website www.myrna Haag.com.

Here's to a healthy Junior League of Tampa!

Myrna Haag is a popular Tampa-based fitness instructor, food coach, and motivational speaker with over 25 years of success with people who were failed dieters and who are now living lean. The author of Never Diet Again: Six Steps to a Balanced & Healthy Life, Myrna lent her talents this year to help the youth served by JLT's Kids in the Kitchen and Connected by 25 projects learn about healthy lifestyles.



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JLT Presidents - Allison Burden, Stephanie Wiendl, Betsy Graham and Jen Carlstedt



Stephanie with husband Joe, sons Cooper (7), Rex (3), and Drew (10) and dog Bailey.

Congratulations to our 2012-2013 JLT President

STEPHANIE HENDRIX WIENDL

Resourceful, talented, amazing, loyal, creative, perseverant, and trustworthy are just a few of the words used by friends and family to describe our new President-Elect and 2012-2013 President, Stephanie Hendrix Wiendl. Growing up in Merritt Island, Florida, her leadership skills were recognized at an early age. Her kindergarten teacher said that Stephanie was, "An extraordinary child who is going to succeed." Her parents, Debbie, a homemaker, and Don, a NASA Engineer, point to her ability to negotiate as the reason she and her two younger brothers, David and Richard, started earning money versus stickers as reward for their good deeds. Further, when patrons were needed for one of their many lemonade sales, it was Stephanie who went door to door encouraging neighbors to visit the stand.

When asked what Stephanie was involved with growing up, it was quickly realized that the better question would be with what was she NOT involved. While attending Merritt Island High School, Stephanie performed in plays, participated with Girls' State, served as co-captain of the cheerleading squad, was on the swim and softball teams, was a debutante, and served as president of the student body. As her mother will tell you, there was never a time Stephanie was not multi-tasking. In addition to her many extracurricular activities, Stephanie was recognized as a Florida Academic Scholar and received a full scholarship to attend the University

of Florida. The scholarship became the deciding factor for why Stephanie became a Gator versus an Auburn Tiger!

In addition to all of her personal activities, Stephanie learned about the value of volunteering from her mother's own Junior League experience. Not only did she participate with numerous projects, but she was also the inspiration for one. According to her mother, "Teen Town" was created out of a desire to provide a safe environment for her daughter and other Merritt Island teens. The project offered bi-weekly dances and gathering opportunities for teens. It also consisted of an Advisory Board made up of community leaders, teachers, and students, including Stephanie. The board was designed to discuss the issues facing area teens and develop effective solutions.

At the University of Florida, Stephanie joined Alpha Delta Pi sorority where she served in a variety of leadership positions including Treasurer. Coincidentally, her first dorm room was on the same floor in Simpson Hall as her dad some twenty years before. While she majored in Accounting, she decided early on to pursue a different career. While on a break from college, she met a handsome Naval Academy student named Joe. Upon her graduation, in 1992, the two started dating and according to Joe, "After a couple of months dating, I gave her my Naval Academy ring, and we have

been inseparable ever since." The couple married in 1995. Joe's admiration for his wife is obvious in his appreciation for her success as a mother, advances in her career, and commitment to the League. He jokingly says that a typical comment he hears is, "I/We love your wife, (as if to say "Joe, you are ok, but we love your wife more")", but he says, "I never get tired of hearing it."

Upon graduation, Stephanie backpacked across Europe with a friend before going to work as a stock broker for Great Western Bank. She decided sales was her passion and began a successful career with Automatic Data Processing (ADP) in Jacksonville (where she joined the Junior League); she was transferred to Philadelphia, and finally moved to Tampa. Before taking a hiatus to have her children, she was recognized as part of ADP's top 10% of salespeople. She has since returned to work as regional Vice President of Certipay where last year she surpassed the company's recent sales records.

In 2000, she transferred to The Junior League of Tampa. That same year, she gave birth to Drew, the first of three adorable boys. Cooper followed in 2004 and then Rex in 2007. Over the years she has served in a variety of volunteer positions at the boys' schools, Bayshore Baptist and Berkeley Prep. While an Active in JLT, Stephanie served on the Public Relations, Baby Bungalow, Fun Troupe, and

Gift Shop committees. She chaired the Gift Shop, Transfer, and (inaugural) Connected by 25 committees. Additionally, she served as Assistant Treasurer, Treasurer, and 2010-2011 Community Vice President. Fortunately for JLT, Stephanie has been described as a, "big-picture gal who, while supremely capable with the details, has the biggest impact when she is at the top." We all look forward to the impact she will have on our organization and the Tampa Bay community.



Stephanie Wiendl and her mother, Debbie Hendrix.

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Sustainer News

By Liz Reynolds
Sustainer President



One of the best parts of being in The Junior League of Tampa is the people you have the privilege of meeting.

Coach Fred Spencer, Club Director at the Wilbert Davis Boys and Girls Club in Tampa's Belmont Heights is a true team player. He enjoys allowing his athletes, scholars and co-workers to get credit for their accomplishments.

Born in Butler, Alabama and raised by his grandmother after his mother's early death, Fred Spencer grew up with a strong work ethic. His grandmother's influence kept him away from drugs and steered him toward sports. In high school, he played basketball, football, and baseball as well as ran track. His Chipola Community College basketball team won 48 and lost 12 games the two years he was there. From community college, Fred played four years in Vigo, Spain. He then coached basketball in Kansas for two years, but realized that he was most satisfied helping children. Plus, he wanted to move back to Tampa to spend more time with his own children.

In 2010, Fred took the Club Director position with the Boys and Girls Club in Belmont Heights. He cleaned and painted the facility. New programs were implemented like Midnight Basketball. Children come to play ball from nine until midnight and hear speakers during their breaks. He instituted a Family Health Fair in August for Parents and children with participation from Tampa General Hospital, Walgreens Drug Store, and Publix. Over 450 people attended. A Family Fitness program now reinforces the lessons learned at the Health Fair, and children can exercise with their parents.

A Federal Grant through Boys and Girls Clubs has helped boost academic enrichment. The Club boasts a Twenty-first Century Computer Laboratory. Certified teachers have been hired to tutor in math and lead academic enrichment programs that are fun. They are called "Disguised Learning" and pair creative learning and structure.

One goal is to foster parental involvement at the Boys and Girls Club. The staff works to make parents feel welcome and comfortable. However, the children are their first priority. Coach Spencer recently heard a mother speak in front of her girls about her abusive relationship. Spencer asked her not to speak about violence toward women as "normal". The mother later thanked him for his intervention.

Fred coaches his own sons' basketball team. The boys are required to maintain a B academic average and to attend an etiquette class. Surprise! They are winning games too.



Sustainers Sandra Gardner, Julie Sargent, Liz Reynolds, and Karen Perry with Coach Spencer.

It has been a privilege for the Sustainers, with Julie Sargent as chairman, to partner with Active Chair Aadonia de la Torre and her Food 4 Kids committee to help with food distribution at such a positive place.

Thank You

Thank you to the many people who made the Spring 2011 Sustainer programs possible!

- Candy Olson, Nancy Minervini, Morgan Gibbons and Lisa-Marie Leihy organized an outstanding Sustainer Financial Peace Seminar.
- Alysia Ekizian put on a great evening at the new Tory Burch store.
- Elaine Sweeney and Wendy Garraty put together two fun Lunch Bunch outings.
- Denise Cassidy chaired Day at the Races at Tampa Bay Downs. Thanks also to Stella Thayer for making this beautiful day possible.
- Carla and Frank Rieger opened their beautiful home to the Spring Cocktail Party. Irene Ferguson and Tammy Waugh chaired this fun evening.
- Marsha Lane organized the Arts and Antiques lecture at Joanne Frazier's home and a fabulous four day art tour in Miami with Art/Entrée of New York.
- Joanne Baldy and Ruth Tapley organized the popular Bridge Group.
- Ginger Doherty arranged a lovely New Sustainer/Sustainer Transfer Luncheon at The Tampa Yacht Club.
- Julie Sargent helped get 340 bags of food filled at Feeding America Tampa Bay and distributed at the Wilbert Davis Boys and Girls Club.
- Sally Hardee chaired the Sustainer Spring Meeting at the Tampa Bay History Center. Lee Touchton made a gift in honor of her aunt to cover museum entry, and Tommy Touchton gave his famous map lecture.
- President-Elect Julie Sargent, Secretary Susan Baldwin, Corresponding Secretary Sue Cox and Sustainer of the Year, Sarah Jane Rubio have been a tremendous help.

My heartfelt thanks to all of you.

Liz Reynolds



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2011 Sustainer of the Year

The Junior League of Tampa Sustainer of the Year Award is presented to the Sustainer who has shown outstanding volunteer service in a community service organization or through varied community service efforts over a significant number of years after the age of 40.

Helen "Robbie" Williams graduated from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a degree in chemistry and medical technology. While her husband finished medical school, she worked as a hematologist, hematology instructor, x-ray technician and bookkeeper for a physician's office.

When her husband was sent to Korea in 1954, Robbie joined the Junior League of Durham and worked at art shows sponsored by the League. She had a job as recreation supervisor and worked with League volunteers to create programs for recreational centers, youth clubs, and summer day camps which she supervised.

After four years, they were transferred to California where they started a family. Two years later, they moved to Charlotte, and Robbie transferred to the Junior League of Charlotte where she worked on the landscaping committee for the new League headquarters.

In 1960, the couple moved to Tampa where Robbie spent her last ten years as an Active. She trooped all over Hillsborough County with the Children's Theater Committee. Next, Robbie was a photographer for *The Sandspur*. As landscaping chairman for headquarters, she physically planted all the plants and trees, helped lay the brick, and got paving and irrigation donated. The next year, Robbie served as Headquarters Chairman and wrote the rules for use of the building. Service at the Tampa Art Center, the Red Cross and as a member of the Board of Directors of Citizen's Alert rounded out her active years. Citizen's Alert was sponsored by the League in the 1960s to raise awareness of the shortages the Tampa Police Department suffered. League volunteers led ninth graders on bus tours



Upon arriving on stage to accept her award, Robbie notices and embraces her daughter, and surprise guest, Melissa "Boo" Markham Weybert.

of interesting places in Tampa including the public library, the court house, and the police department where they saw a juvenile holding cell. Volunteers held an annual Police Ball and helped raise salaries and get adequate equipment.

In 1969, Robbie began working with a company she later purchased and ran for 20 years. From 1990 to 1995, she helped start a support group for Phone Friends, a group which raised money to pay for a phone bank to support latch key children. It was managed by the University of South Florida Mental Health Association. University student volunteers manned these phones to counsel and tutor children left alone at home after school. Volunteers sponsored fashion shows and auctions to raise money. She was treasurer and reservations chairman for this group.

In 1996, Robbie joined the Chiselers and became treasurer for the new cookbook. The next year they sold over 5,000 books and netted over \$100,000. She created an inventory control system for the sale of these books and an accounting system to withhold sales tax and pay

it quarterly. The next three years, she served as Treasurer for the Chiselers Christmas ornament sales. From 2000 to present she has been Reservations Chairman for Chiselers' Preview Parties and addresses over 1,000 invitations yearly for these events. In 2002, Robbie produced a database for the Chiselers membership, which allowed her to print monthly meeting reminders and other necessary communications. From 2004 until 2008, she served as Corresponding Secretary for the Chiselers. In 2009, Database Chairman became a permanent Chiselers Board of Directors position with this candidate as chairman. From 2005 until the present she has been Keepsake Committee treasurer.

Robbie lives in Tampa with her husband Bill and has three children, Colonel Melissa "Boo" Markham Weybert, Chuck Markham and Peter Markham. "Boo" was a surprise guest at Annual Dinner. There were many hugs between the two women. Robbie has always been a doer. As Mrs. Betty Wood mentioned upon introducing her at the ceremony, "Robbie is truly an energetic lady. Physically, and this is

the truth, she planted trees and layed the very walk you walk over when you enter League headquarters." Indeed, her accomplishments, in so many areas, have made a difference to us all. Congratulations to Robbie Williams, the 2010-2011 Sustainer of the Year.

Thank you to Nicole Geller of Nicole Geller Photography for these photos.

"Robbie has always been a doer. As Mrs. Betty Wood mentioned upon introducing her at the ceremony, "Robbie is truly an energetic lady. Physically, and this is the truth, she planted trees and layed the very walk you walk over when you enter League headquarters."

— Mrs. Betty Wood



Liz Reynolds, Melissa "Boo" Markham Weybert, Helen "Robbie" Williams, and Betty Wood

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2010 - 2011 Inspiring Leader

*Pictured at left: Kathleen Thaxton,
Nicole Hubbard, and Betsy Graham*

The Inspiring Leader Award is given annually to a JLT Board member who inspires and motivates not only herself but the League members around her. She instills pride in those with whom she serves and consistently lives our Mission. This year's winner, Nicole Hubbard, has served in many leadership roles in her six years in the League, including Holiday Gift Market Merchant Coordinator, Holiday Gift Market Chair, and Placement Chair this past year.

Nicole's strong leadership capabilities resulted in a highly successful year for the Placement Committee, in its second year of implementing the revamped Placement Mentor responsibilities and TLC - The League Cares programs. In the beginning of the year, she took the time to understand her committee members' areas of interest and motivations for volunteering with the League. At her very first meeting, she effectively communicated her goals, vision for the committee, and the committee members' roles in helping to achieve these goals. Because she related to each of them on a personal level, she was able to gain the respect and support of the committee while giving them the tools to complete the task at hand.

Nicole is a wonderful role model whose energy is infectious. She motivates by highlighting members' strengths, while at

"I am forever amazed by her ability to switch roles from being a terrific wife, mother, and friend. I'm a better man for having known Nicole and I am truly blessed to have her in my life."

— Matt Hubbard, Nicole's husband

the same time instilling pride in their work. She consistently recognizes outstanding individuals which creates a positive environment of praise and continual celebration. Nicole is skilled at painting a picture of success and outlining the path to get there, all while making her committee members' responsibilities feel like fun rather than work. Most importantly, she always stressed the importance of the Placement Mentor's responsibilities, which made committee members feel their actions were truly helping to make the League a better place.

Nicole never misses an opportunity to thank her committee members for their work and always treats them with respect. One committee member stated, "I truly believe her number one goal is to make us want to do the best we can do in our placement. She wants us to succeed."

Her sincerity and commitment to the League is inspiring. Nicole is incredibly dedicated not only to The Junior League of Tampa but also to each and every person on her committee, genuinely caring both about their League careers and personal lives. She is organized, caring, passionate, loyal and truly leads by example, going above and beyond and doing it with a smile. And she does all of this while working as a Nurse Anesthetist for Gulf-to-Bay Anesthesiology and caring for her growing family, including husband Matt, 2 1/2 year old son Austin and daughter Ansley, whose November 2010 birth did not slow her down one bit!

Our 2010-2011 Inspiring Leader is a dynamic woman who embodies the modern woman in many ways via her dedication to work, family, friends and the League.

**Congratulations to one of
The Junior League of
Tampa's shining stars-
Nicole Hubbard!**

Our Mission in Motion: The PDEC Process and New Projects

Founded in 1926, The Junior League of Tampa, Inc. is an organization of 1700 women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving communities through effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable.

By Jennifer Simpson-Oliver

It was July 2010, and Lynette Russell, Chair of the Project Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC), and her committee members pored over 18 applications submitted by area agencies all vying to be chosen as a new project for the League. While in recent years, the selection process for new projects started with referrals from Sustainers and Actives, or an agency that contacted the League directly, this past year PDEC took on the extra challenge of soliciting requests for proposals in an open letter to agencies.

As always, potential projects had to align with the League's Mission statement and be of interest to members as demonstrated by the results of the most recent JLT membership survey. The chosen projects had to fit the League's current goals, and also show a financial need and the opportunity to provide quality volunteer placements. Most project commitments are 2-3 years, depending on several factors, including the goal of the project, the funding and the volunteer hours needed. Once the League's time with the project is complete, the project is "launched" within the agency for it to take on the project as its own.

As in years past, the PDEC members then divided the list of potential projects and met with the agencies for more in-depth evaluations. PDEC received feedback from Actives, Provisionals, Past Presidents, and Community Advisory Board members through a series of roundtable discussions. By October, the list had narrowed to five.

After more intensive site visits and input from the fall membership survey, PDEC met in mid-December to decide on the two project finalists, the Salvation Army Getting Ahead Project and the Heart Gallery Birthday Buddies Project. In March 2011, the membership voted on and officially approved these projects as new projects for the League.

In addition to these two amazing new projects for 2011-12, the membership, voting to approve PDEC's recommendations, also renewed the Food 4 Kids, Kids in the Kitchen, and DACCO projects and as well reviewed the activities of the Community Action Committee. The League will have 13 community projects with available volunteer opportunities in the coming year. These are all exciting opportunities that have a real impact in the community.



Project Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC)

Project 1: The Salvation Army Getting Ahead



The Salvation Army Getting Ahead Project focuses on homeless women and children who reside at the Hospitality House, a 50-bed transitional housing program that can accommodate up to 29 women and 21 children for up to two years. These are not perpetually homeless families but are victims of circumstance, as in the case of a divorce or job loss. Hospitality House offers residents the skills and services needed to be self-sufficient again by providing weekly counseling, skills training, self-help programs, and job placement assistance. The women must meet specific criteria, including getting their education (GED or college credits).

Hospitality House saw the need for additional life skills classes to improve its success rate. Community Vice President Stephanie Wiendl attended a seminar in Sarasota entitled "Getting Ahead in a Just Getting by World", which became the cornerstone of the project. The program empowers the women to better themselves, set realistic goals, and to have perseverance in a 15-week course. The League's commitment is to purchase the curriculum and to train League volunteers, as well as staff from Hospitality House, to be facilitators of the program's topics.

Hospitality House also provides donated clothes for school as well as job interviews. However, the donated clothes are often not appropriate for the women and children (purple cocktail shoes cannot be worn to a job interview!). Instead they need more practical clothing, and something we all take for granted, undergarments. In addition, the closet is currently in shambles and is virtually unusable. The League has committed to build out the closet and restock it with undergarments for the first year. The Getting Ahead Project is a three-year commitment and will be funded in year one by a generous grant from the Eckerd Family Foundation. Lynette Russell says of the project, "It is way to have huge impact in the community as there is potential to roll this out to other agencies and get them involved in the concept."



The JLT's first project to tackle! The current closet at the Hospitality House is sparse and unorganized. This year, the League will restock and update the closet.

Project 2: Heart Gallery Birthday Buddies



The Heart Gallery was started in the 1990s in New Mexico by a photographer and adoptive mother. Her photographs gave life, literally, to children waiting to be adopted. The Heart Gallery of Tampa Bay saw a void where, year after year, the children awaiting adoption would not have a party or gift to celebrate their birthday. The Birthday Buddies project was created to help these children realize what every one of us experiences every year, a real birthday.

The League will host 14 birthday parties through the fall and spring. Each child will complete a "wish list" to decide what they would like to do and will list the top five presents they would like. Based on the wish lists, League volunteers will become party planners! Each party will have a \$300 budget for cake, supplies, etc. The League volunteers also will create a photo-book of the birthday event for the child to enjoy. The Heart Gallery will solicit gifts through "giving trees". The gifts donated through the giving trees are stored in a warehouse by category, and League volunteers will prepare these gifts for upcoming birthdays.

Birthday Buddies



The Junior Leagues' *Kids in the Kitchen*

By Sarah Hall



Girls at Just Elementary learn how to make a healthy dessert; vanilla yogurt with raspberries, mango and blueberries.

Over the past thirty years, childhood obesity has nearly tripled and has become an epidemic affecting children nationwide. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), approximately 17% of children between the ages of two and nineteen are obese. Children are considered obese if their Body Mass Index (BMI) measures at or above the 95th percentile on a same age-and-sex growth chart. Obesity causes a variety of health problems such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, which are all becoming increasingly prevalent at younger ages.

In response to these challenges, various programs and initiatives have started to educate children and their parents on the importance of a healthy lifestyle. One such program is an Association of Junior Leagues International (AJLI) initiative called Junior Leagues' *Kids in the Kitchen*. This program began in 2006, and to date over 200 Junior Leagues throughout the United States,

Canada, Mexico, and the United Kingdom have participated. The goal of this program is to empower youth to make healthy lifestyle choices and help reverse the growth of childhood obesity and its associated health issues.

This year, The Junior League of Tampa participated in the Kids in the Kitchen program in two ways. First, the Kids in the Kitchen Committee, led by Chair Denise Schultz, worked with fourth and fifth grade students at Just Elementary through a series of events to educate the students about health, nutrition, exercise, and growing their own food. For these events, the League's committee teamed with nutrition and fitness educator Myrna Haag, project sponsor Sweetbay Supermarket, the YMCA, and Lifestyle Family Fitness. The second part of this year's Kids in the Kitchen program was the Kids in the Kitchen Challenge to League members to live a healthier lifestyle. With a campaign slogan of "Love your family. Love your friends. Love yourself. Let's get healthy together!",

events for League members and their children involved learning from Myrna Haag about her six steps to getting healthy, as well as a Sweetbay event where Myrna led members and their children around the grocery store to talk about and sample different healthy foods.

The kickoff event at Just Elementary was held on February 15, 2011 and demonstrated the six steps of being healthy. Step one focused on exercise, and YMCA volunteers showed students a variety of different exercises. There was also a pedometer station where each student learned about pedometers and how they can help track one's daily exercise and physical activity. Steps two through four concentrated on protein and fiber, good fats, and portion size. Step five was a hydration station where the students learned about the importance of water and hydration as a part of a healthy lifestyle. Finally, step six focused on empowerment and building strength and confidence in the students, as well as encouraging them to be healthy.

The events following the kickoff event showed students and their parents a variety of easy, budget-friendly ways to make healthy choices and implement a healthy lifestyle. The second event for Just Elementary was the Garden Event held on February 24, 2011. During this event the students planted gardens, potted their own plant, and learned about growing their own food through conventional gardens and hydro-gardens.

The final event was held on April 21, 2011 at Just Elementary. Prior to this event, Just Elementary students and the YMCA worked together to design an obstacle course for the students to use as a means of fun and physical activity. At the final event, parents came to do the obstacle course with their children. Also, the students participated in a Top Chef cook-off to demonstrate the skills they learned over the past few months. Finally, they took a food bingo test that demonstrated how much they had learned over the course of the project. Being healthy is important for everyone, especially children, and, overall, the Kids in the Kitchen events at Just Elementary were a great start to teach the students and their parents the importance of being healthy through nutrition and fitness and the ease of making healthy choices.



At the Kickoff of Kids in the Kitchen, Mo Chiodini from the YMCA shows Just Elementary students a series of fun exercises.



Chef Patrick Lau instructs Just Elementary students how to make nutritionally balanced pizza.



"We are excited to have The Junior League of Tampa working in our school. This program is great for our kids. It has given them an opportunity to learn about healthy eating and have hands-on experiences to plant a garden and grow food organically, as well as see the nutritional and health value behind it. We are excited, and we know the skills the kids are learning now will impact their lives in the future."

— Carolyn Hill, Just Elementary Principal

From Center to Circumference:

The Provisional Class Project

By Cynthia Valdez



This year, The Junior League of Tampa's Provisional Class was given the opportunity to serve on smaller versions of some of the JLT's largest and most successful projects as well as some behind-the-scenes administrative committees.

The program receiving the Provisional Class's focus this year was the YMCA Community Learning Center at Sulphur Springs Elementary, an area where half of the residents live below the federal poverty level. This YMCA after-school program serves approximately 85 families; according to Jason Grooms, Program Director, that's about 200 children. "In addition to academic enrichment, we offer programs such as a step club, gardening, ballet and lyrical dance, and leadership training for the older kids," Jason said. "The kids love it here!" The YMCA program is already making an enormous impact in its community. In just two years, program attendance has soared, school quality measures have drastically increased, and parental involvement is at an all time high.

To kick things off, JLT's first ever Provisional Training Committee was tasked with preparing the League's newest members for their very first project. Through various discussions regarding poverty, they educated the Provisionals about the children whose lives they would be working to improve.

The challenges of poverty are often most prevalent at mealtime when simply putting food on the table is a chore. When the Provisionals brought the League's Food 4 Kids program to the Sulphur Springs YMCA, families were elated. Parent Jerica Hodge, who has six of her seven children enrolled in the program, said, "My kids are going to eat! They love this!" Each child left with a bag of nutritious, filling

foods including fruits, whole grains and vegetables.

Less than a week later, the Provisionals returned armed with 600 free books. In addition to providing snacks and crafts, the Children's Literacy Committee brought authors Patricia Hano and Gable Yerrid to read from their books, *Tyler Meets the Moon* and *Marley's Treasure*, respectively. Each child left with three books of their own, and any left over materials remained in the YMCA's library.

The Kids in the Kitchen program, designed to educate children about the merits of living a healthful lifestyle, was brought to the Sulphur Springs YMCA as well. In addition to teaching the kids about healthy eating habits, the provisional committee set up an obstacle course and offered a mini Zumba class, giving the kids a healthy outlet for expelling all of their energy. Each child took home CD's of Zumba music, jump ropes and other toys that promote physical activity.



The Stock the Closet committee filled the YMCA's supply closet with lots of basic needs items such as soap and shampoo, as well as fun items like basketballs and board games. School supplies fill the shelves as well, reducing the need for the paper and pencil vending machines that line the walls of the school's cafeteria. And just to liven things up a bit, committee members painted the walls of the closet in bright yellow and blue, the school's colors.

Leaving no lesson unlearned, a committee was tasked with teaching the children from the Sulphur Springs YMCA proper etiquette. Learning to write a proper thank you note, how to tie a necktie, and the right way to set a table were just a few lessons on the agenda for a Saturday afternoon event. Afterwards, the kids were given an opportunity to practice their newfound skills on family members and YMCA staff members. Leaving with brand new thank you notes, neckties and strands of pearls, the kids held their heads a little higher, thanks in part to the proper posture they learned that day.

Rounding out the Provisional Project was a trip to the Glazer Children's Museum. Since a large number of families in the Sulphur Springs area are single-parent families with one (often very low) income, visiting a museum is a luxury. Not only is the cost of admission too much for many of these families to bear, but the cost of transporting their children to and from the museum can even be prohibitive. Most of the children in the program might not otherwise have had the opportunity to visit the museum.

The events hosted by the JLT have surely provided the influence for positive future change for the kids of the Sulphur Springs YMCA and their families. "This is teaching positive habits that will affect [the children's] everyday environment," YMCA employee Myron Roberson said. "The change is from center to circumference: it has a ripple effect that begins in the center with the child and makes its way outward to the parent."

Thank you to Provisional Marissa Moss and Marissa Moss Photography for the photos on these pages and others throughout the magazine.



JLT Provisional helps Sulphur Springs Elementary student learn to tie a necktie at the Etiquette Event.

Sulphur Springs Community Profile

- 50% of families live below federal poverty line
- Per capita income is \$10,600; this is less than half of the 2009 federal poverty guideline
- One of every two families lives in poverty; five times greater than the Hillsborough County average
- Female head of household is three times more likely to occur than the county rate
- Unemployment twice the county rate
- Lack of high school degree 50% higher

MAKING A RETURN: The Provisional Bus Tour



By Sommer Stiles

This past February, a longstanding JLT tradition was revived after a many year absence - the Provisional Bus Tour. The Sandspur Contributing Writer Sommer Stiles shares the story of her day on the bus.

When I arrived at headquarters that early Saturday morning at 8:30 a.m., the front walk was overflowing with Provisional members eager to start their day. Dozens of smiling faces, but none that I recognized. I suddenly felt like a Provisional again myself, looking for the one or two women I knew and hoping to make friends with those I did not yet know. After a bit of crowd maneuvering, I found the check-in table hidden behind a wall of women dressed in black and khaki. On the roster I found my name – “Sommer Stiles, Bus #1.”

The bus was cold. The driver must have cranked up the air in anticipation of a full bus of women slightly glowing from the more balmy temperatures outdoors. A detail soon forgotten once each seat was occupied and the warmth of excitement filled the air. I grabbed a seat in the third row just behind Scott, the tour guide, and Tracie Domino, Provisional Education Chair.

As we pulled out of the drive at headquarters, Scott enlightened us with local Davis Islands trivia. Did you know the islands were built from mud dredged from the bottom of Tampa Bay? His knowledge of the area came with a certain flare only a true Tampanian could accomplish. Though he would shortly take a back seat once introduced to two women who would soon add their own colorful commentary to the tour- Sustainers Betty Wood and Ruthanne McLean.

Betty and Ruthanne were a delightful duo keeping the ladies entertained sharing personal stories from their Provisional year and other memorable moments throughout their League experience. At the time when the two women joined, the League was extremely difficult to get into due to the strict application requirements and new member quotas. Ruthanne was one of only eighteen women in her Provisional class which is roughly 15% of the average class size today. She and Betty met and would soon become fast friends through their involvement on the Admissions Committee. Attributing her attitude to her many leadership experiences in the League, Betty stated “Being a good volunteer with a good attitude leads to opportunity – plain and simple.” We had arrived at our first project stop, DACCO, the words still floating like a cloud above our heads would soon sink in.

I waited for the rest of the women to exit the bus, following immediately after with my camera and journal handy. I was there to observe, but sat alongside the group of Provisionals equally curious to learn about this current JLT project. Colletta, a DACCO resident, bravely shared the story of how she came to be at the facility. DACCO had “opened doors that [I] thought were closed forever,” she said. Her words humbled the room, and we were all suddenly reminded of our opportunity to make a difference.

After Colletta’s presentation and a tour of the facility, we boarded the bus and headed to our next stop, Mary Lee’s House, the project of the 2010 Provisional Class of which I was a member. The rocking chairs on the front porch and tree growing from the waiting room, both funded by JLT, were familiar sights that for me, rekindled memories of my first year in the League, and for the ladies who accompanied me, I can only assume served as another reminder of the opportunities afforded by their voluntarism.

Making our way from Mary Lee’s House to our third and final stop, The Straz Center for the Performing Arts, Ruthanne told us about a Provisional Ball once held at The Straz Center. Imagine dressing in full costume and being pulled in rickshaws by the husbands of League committee members up to the theatre. On the day of the bus tour, we did not arrive in rickshaws, but we certainly made an entrance. Over 100 women dressed in JLT t-shirts disembarking from three tour line buses – now there’s a show stopper!

At The Straz Center, we toured Carol Morsani Hall and Ferguson Hall, the theatre named after Louise Lykes Ferguson, one of the League’s oldest living members. Walking back to the bus, I had the chance to speak with Betty one-on-one about involvement in the League and what kept her engaged all these years. She shared with me quite candidly that her years of service had been the key to her longevity in the League but also in life. Once again, she had me thinking.

The tour ended back at headquarters with a box lunch, but perhaps carried on in the hearts and minds of those who attended that day. Having provided an inside look at current and past projects within the League, the Provisional Bus Tour served as strong reminder of the importance of voluntarism, and educated us on the never-ending opportunity to make a difference. To borrow a few words from Betty,

“If you are not inspired, you better get checked on.”



Betty Wood sharing her personal stories.



Sommer Stiles along with the other members of Bus #1.

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TURNING VOLUNTARISM INTO ADVOCACY

By Jessica Felix

We all know that The Junior League of Tampa's Mission is to promote voluntarism, develop the potential of women, and improve communities through effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. What you may not realize is that this Mission leads members of our League, along with members of the other 23 Junior Leagues in Florida, to the state capitol every year to advocate for legislative changes that will better our communities on a larger scale.

The Junior Leagues of Florida State Public Affairs Committee (SPAC), is the advocacy arm for all of the Florida Junior Leagues. For nearly 40 years, SPAC has been devoted to supporting legislation that promotes the Junior League Mission. The members of SPAC meet several times a year to research and debate the potential issues to which they are considering lending support. Once an agenda for the next legislative session is agreed upon, members step into action at the local level, working with our local community organizations and representatives to strengthen the voice behind proposed legislation. After the work is done here at home, they move onto the state level lobbying senators and other governmental officials to gain further support for the proposed legislation.

Historically, the Junior Leagues of Florida have focused on a number of causes to support at the state legislative level, such

as booster seat safety, the reduction of cyber-crimes, and the support of young women in detention centers (the GAP program). In the past, SPAC and the participating Leagues would support a number of causes each year and continue to support certain causes year after year even if they did not find success during the legislative sessions. SPAC, however, has recently initiated a shift toward a more concentrated and strategic approach to lending legislative support.

During this year's session, SPAC's number one priority was improving the foster care system, and, more importantly,



Stacy Perez (committee member), Sara Evans (2011-2012 SPAC Co-Chair, Isabel Dewey (JLT Public Affairs Committee Chair and 2011-2012 SPAC Co-Chair), Rep. Rachel Burgin (State Representative) and Connie Milito (Director of Government Affairs for Hillsborough County Public Schools)



Charlie Crist, signing the "Independent Living Services Bill" at Connected by 25

improving outcomes for older children aging out of the foster care system. It is a distressing fact that without intervention, children who have experienced foster care are more likely to become homeless, incarcerated and unemployed adults. In Florida, children age out of foster care at the age of 18. There is evidence, however, that young adults who remain in the foster care system until the age of 21 achieve more successful outcomes when they leave the system. Federal legislation signed into law in 2008, the Fostering Connection to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (H.R. 6893), provides support for states to accomplish this. Due to the budget cuts faced during the 2011 session, the SPAC supported legislation did not pass. However, strong groundwork was laid that will allow leagues to push for similar measures next year.

Most JLT members are familiar with Connected by 25, a program strongly supported locally by JLT. The premise behind Connected by 25 is to counteract the statistics above by offering much needed mentoring, services and support to youth aging out of the foster care system. Representative Glorioso, a strong advocate of children in foster care, sponsored House Bill 1241 that would assist youth aging out of the system and provide them with the resources required to live independently. Historically, when young adults aged out of the foster care system, they were given a monthly check and sent on their way to fend for themselves. The funds they received may or may not have been used wisely by the youth, and the monetary benefits they received did nothing to promote the youth's success.

This year's proposed legislation linked the monetary benefits to additional programs and services for the youths in foster care up to age 21, provided that the youth were either 1) completing high school or an equivalency program; 2) enrolled in post-secondary or vocational school; 3) participating in a program or activity designed to promote, or remove barriers to employment; 4) employed for at least 80 hours per month; or 5) incapable of doing any of these activities due to a medical condition. In other words, the benefits

would be tied to the continuation of the youth's educational goals, in order to motivate the youths to continue their schooling and become independent and successful adults. In return, the youths would be rewarded with additional services to assist them in accomplishing their goals. Although there was strong support for the measure, it did not survive the difficult battle that all prospective laws face. Next year's session will build upon the research and experience of community groups across Florida to both cut costs and serve youth aging out more effectively and efficiently.

Isabel Dewey, JLT Public Affairs Committee Chair and Co-Chair of SPAC with JLT Active Sara Evans next year, believes the Leagues' support of this legislation is important. Each year, members of Public Affairs build connections with our lawmakers and strive to improve policy that impacts the people we serve here in Tampa. However, changing policy is an incremental and long-term proposition. Therefore, our members must keep our issues at the top of mind of our lawmakers year after year.

“Through our lobbying efforts, we can **elevate** the fantastic **volunteer work** we do in our community by affecting the policy that has a **direct impact on our community partners** and the individuals we serve. In the case of the new foster care legislation, we want to **empower youth** that are on the right track by giving them the same **support system** in their young adult years that we had.”

— Active Isabel Dewey

To learn more about SPAC and the Junior Leagues of Florida's commitment to improving state legislation relating to foster care, you can go to www.jlftamp.org.

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JLT Featured Members

LAUREN MCQUEEN



Member status:
Active

Junior League Member Since:
2009

Current Placement: VP
Fund Development Assistant

Education/Occupation: B.A., Gov. & World Affairs-University of Tampa, Assoc. Dir., American Cancer Society

Family: Engaged to Chris Gstalder, my mom lives in Loudonville, NY and my sister lives in New Orleans.

I Wish I Knew How To: Play the piano.

If I Could, I Would: End all cancers in the world.

I regret: Live life to have no regrets!

Favorite Thing About Tampa: 1) Living by the water. 2) Cuban food!

Community Activities: I support The Junior League of Tampa, Relay For Life, Making Strides Against Breast Cancer, and The Lion's Eye Institute

Three Accomplishments You are Proud of: My recent promotion at work, graduating from UT, and my dancing skills.

Something You Wish Someone Had Told You Earlier: Spend more time with family.

Your Life Philosophy on A Bumper Sticker: Don't worry, be happy!

What Experience has Changed You Most: When my father passed away in 2007 from cancer, it changed my life. My new passion became finding a cure for cancer which led me to a wonderful career with my current employer, the American Cancer Society.

My Worst Habit is: Cracking my knuckles over and over again.

One Thing People Wouldn't Know About You: In 2004, I went skydiving over an active volcano in New Zealand.

MEAGAN KEMPTON



Member status:
Active/New Sustainer

Junior League Member Since:
1998

Current Placement:
Glazer Children's Museum

Education/Occupation: Masters in Accounting from University of Florida but currently working as an Assistant Director of Children's Ministries.

Family: Husband Ted and children Elizabeth, Cole, and Amelia.

I Wish I Knew How To: Sing.

If I Could, I Would: Take my whole family on a European vacation.

I regret: Not taking time off after college to travel more.

Favorite Thing About Tampa: The weather (minus July and August).

Three Accomplishments You are Proud of: 1) My family 2) Co-chairing VBS for 383 children 3) Passing the C.P.A. exam on the first try.

Something You Wish Someone Had Told You Earlier: Do what you love and don't worry about what you get paid to do it.

Your Life Philosophy on A Bumper Sticker: Enjoy the journey.

What Experience has Changed You Most: Motherhood.

My Worst Habit is: Eating sweets.

One Thing People Wouldn't Know About You: I am a certified scuba diver.

CYNTHIA VALDEZ



Member status:
Active

Junior League Member Since:
2009

Current Placement:
Contributing Writer for *The Sandspur*

Education/Occupation: Majored in English at USF, am currently a stay-at-home mom trying my hand at freelance writing.

Family: Husband Tom, son Cameron (18), daughter Taylor (15), daughter Caroline (3).

I Wish I Knew How To: Speak a foreign language fluently.

If I Could, I Would: Travel the world with my husband.

I regret: I'm a mom and I'm human, so I'm always making mistakes that I later regret, but I try not to spend too much time thinking about them.

Favorite Thing About Tampa: Everything, there's so much to do and see!

Community Activities: The Junior League of Tampa, Mothers & More, and Hands on Tampa Bay.

Three Accomplishments You are Proud of: Completing the majority of my undergrad work while being a single mom with a full-time job; finishing my first 5k in 2010; and quitting smoking.

Something You Wish Someone Had Told You Earlier: How important flossing really is.

Your Life Philosophy on A Bumper Sticker: Stop Talking, Start Doing! (sometimes I have to remind myself of this)

What Experience has Changed You Most: Every experience changes in me in some way; I'm fortunate that most of my experiences have brought positive changes my way.

One Thing People Wouldn't Know About You: I was adopted at the age of one and a half, and I know my birth parents and their families.



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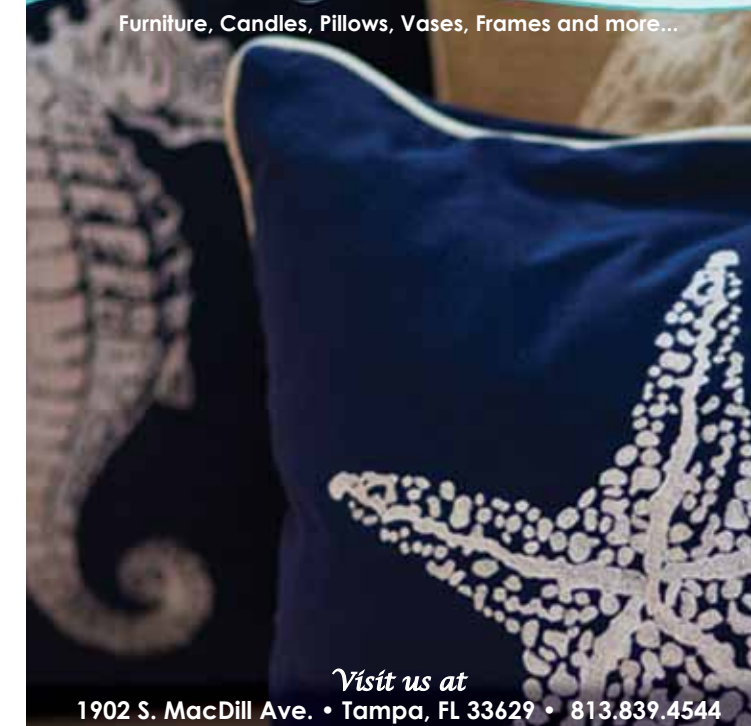
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ANTIPASTI SANDWICH

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- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1 loaf focaccia | 4 slices provolone cheese |
| 2 or 3 tablespoons Dijon mustard | 2 cups arugula |
| 8 ounces sliced deli ham or turkey | 1 tablespoon olive oil |
| 3 Roasted Red Bell Peppers, cut into strips | 2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar |
| | Salt and pepper to taste |

Cut the bread into halves horizontally. Spread the Dijon mustard in a thin layer on the cut sides of the bread. Layer the ham and roasted bell peppers on one of the bread halves. Layer the cheese on the remaining bread half. Toss the arugula with the olive oil, vinegar, salt and pepper in a bowl. Pile on top of the ham and roasted bell peppers. Place the remaining bread half cheese side down on top of the arugula. Press firmly and cut into four equal pieces.

Place the sandwich on a layer of plastic wrap, keeping all four pieces together, and wrap tightly. Store in the refrigerator or a cooler until serving time. The longer the sandwich is stored, the better the flavors of the sandwich will meld.

Yield: 4 servings



The League...Out and About



Lisa Lockhart and Terrie Dodson at Annual Dinner



Alison Reteneller and Lindsay Carter at Annual Dinner



50 Year Members at Spring Sustainer Luncheon, Bottom row (l to r) Libby Dickinson, Mary Audrey Wilson, Joan McKay, Top Row, (l to r) Roberta McAtee, Joan Fields, 1961 Provisional Education Chair Lucile Foster, and Patricia Gray.



Marilyn Monroe (Heather Vermette), Justin Bieber (Allison Burden) and the Black Swan, (Tracie Domino) at the Hollywood themed Placement Fair.



Social Committee at Sideberns after the February General Membership Meeting.



JLT members nominated to represent our League at the 2011 Organizational Development Institute (ODI).

Looking Back & Moving Forward

The Junior League of Tampa has a special and significant history. As we look back at our 85th year of service, we hope that we have paved the way for future League members to continue our legacy of service for the next 85 years and beyond.



The JLT in 2010 - 2011

- There were **1,675** total members
- Financial commitments to **community projects** totaled \$256,150
- **10,000+** shoppers attended the 7th annual Holiday Gift Market
- 20,000 books, 28,000 pounds of food, and **1,300 Love Bundles** backpacks were given to children in need
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