

coastalcolumns

A PUBLICATION BY THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF SAVANNAH



Bright in the
Community

spring 2017

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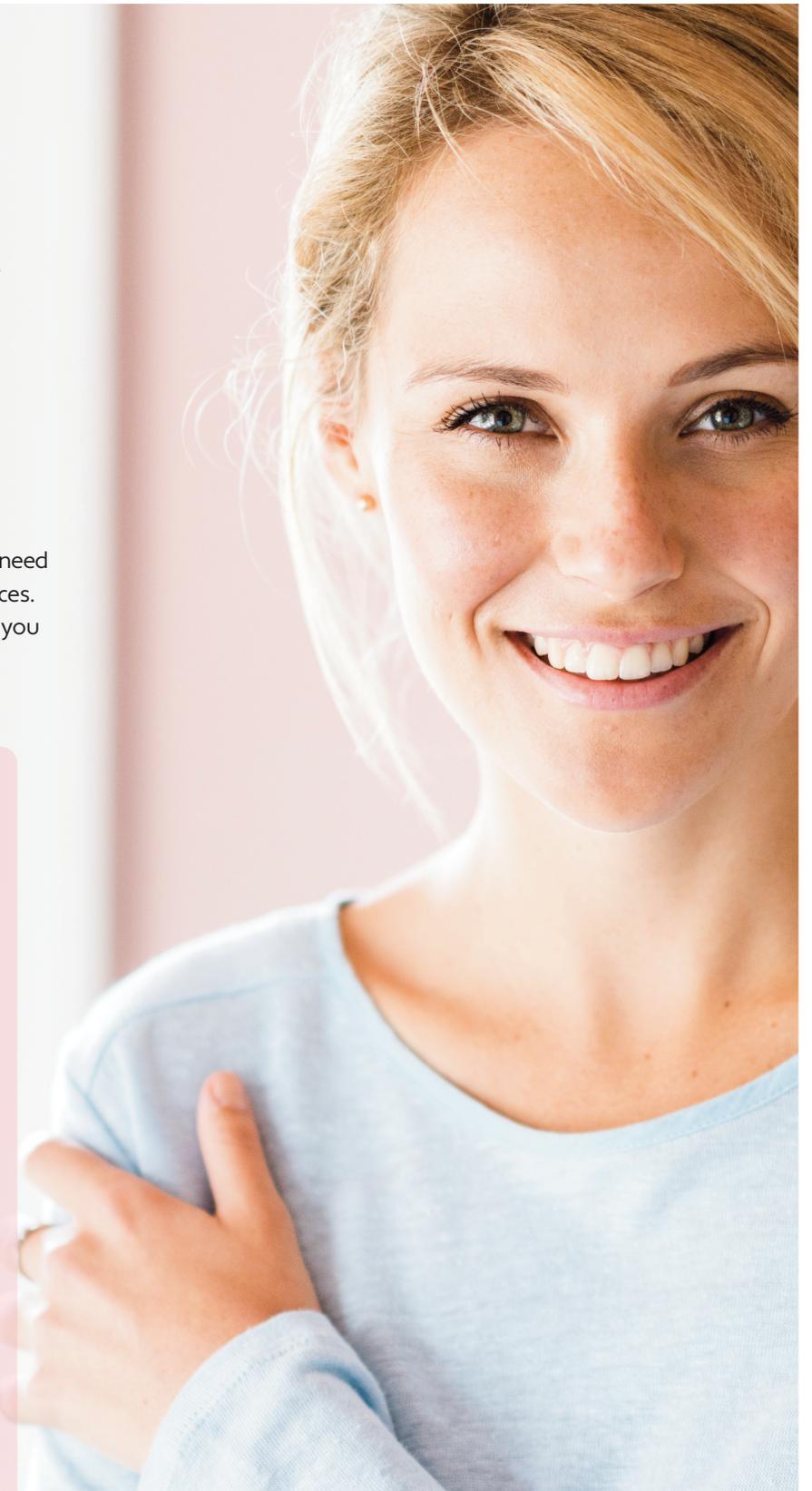
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JUNIOR LEAGUE OF SAVANNAH

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Katie Kellogg

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spring 2017

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our mission

The Junior League of Savannah is an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. *Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable.*



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message from Katie Kellogg

Editor

As we enter the summer months and some of us begin training for our new leadership positions, I can't help but remember the constant phrase I heard during my time as a provisional: "You get out of the League what you put into it."

At the time, I was not considering a leadership role in the League and it wasn't until my fourth active year that I accepted a leadership position as the Ronald McDonald House committee chair. Not only was it rewarding to see and interact with the families that we were helping, I also gained valuable organizational and leadership skills that I am able to carry with me at my job and in my personal life. Same goes for the next year when I chaired Fit Kids Fest. With the skills that I had learned the previous year, I was able to build on those and work with the committee to plan a successful, free, community event (and as we saw this year, Fit Kids Fest has only vastly improved and has reached even more community members).

Many of the League members this year put in a great deal of their time and even their families' time to make the League and its projects the best they can be. A prime example is rescheduling Thrift Sale and Masquerade. I was working one of my pricing shifts at the Civic Center when we heard over the radio that parts of South Carolina had been issued a mandatory evacuation, meanwhile I believe our area still had not received any evacuation orders. As we were pricing thrift items and hearing the evacuation news, several of us were looking around at all of the thrift that had already been priced and set out for the planned Saturday sale. It was overwhelming to say the least. The time spent and work done by the League members and their families packing up and storing the thrift and cleaning up the Civic Center in a matter of hours was a feat of dedicated volunteers. A mere two months later, the 69th Annual Thrift Sale was set back up at the Civic Center and ready to receive shoppers.

The rescheduled Thrift Sale and Masquerade both turned out to be successful despite the hurdles. The success of both was highly contributable to the willingness of the League volunteers to go above and beyond and work additional pricing and sale day shifts and to work extra hours to coordinate with the event venues to reschedule. There is a great sense of pride among League members for pulling together and not letting the chaos of Hurricane Matthew cancel two of our biggest annual fundraisers.

During my time in leadership there have been several speed bumps of which I have overcome (albeit not as extreme as a hurricane evacuation) with the help of dedicated committee members and volunteers. I know that dealing with and overcoming hurdles while planning a large community event or organizing dinners for overwhelmed families produces accomplishment and helps to change people's lives and the reward is great when you see that happening first-hand. So, if you are currently in a leadership position in the League or are starting one this upcoming year, remember that for every obstacle that may arise comes with it an even bigger reward for yourself, your committee and the community.

Safe travels this summer and I'll see you all next year as the Placement Chair-Elect!

Katie Kellogg



message from Lisa Muller

Outgoing President

As the warm spring days grow longer and longer and summer fast approaches, the warmth and energy reminds me of the beauty of light.

I recently purchased a hydrangea plant for my mother-in-law. I do not have a "green thumb." Before I had a chance to give her this gift, I noticed that the beautiful pink flowers had wilted. This was within just one day after purchasing this plant. (Part of me wondered if just being near me, the plant had decided to give up.) Determined, I decided to try a little bit of water and a little bit of sun. In just a few hours, with the help of the water and the sunlight, the beautiful pink blooms stood back up proud and tall.

The theme "Learn. Serve. Light the way..." served us this year as a simple reminder of our mission. As an organization of women committed to volunteerism, we also strive to improve ourselves. Leadership development is one key distinction that sets the Junior League apart from other nonprofit organizations. Many groups offer opportunities for people to volunteer and help others. The Junior League provides these volunteer opportunities, as well as, a chance to serve in various roles within our organization and to receive training to learn, improve, and develop skills to aid in leadership.

The sun's warmth and energy are both needed to help plants grow. That light provides the process for the new growth on the plants that we are now seeing in gardens. As we "light the way" as leaders in our League, may our warmth and energy continue to help others in our community and enhance the growth among our leaders within our organization. Through these next months as we are out enjoying long summer days, remember the importance of your light, warmth, and energy in helping The Junior League of Savannah meet our mission.

Lisa Muller



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message from Melissa Jackson

Incoming President 2017-2018

Recently, I was asked to describe the women who are members of the Junior League of Savannah. My first thought... where do I begin? How can I accurately describe an organization that consists of over 800 women from diverse backgrounds? An organization that includes new members with less than a year of experience to members who have decades of experience. Is it even possible to include every attribute of our members?

The short answer is no; however, there are traits that connect us.

We are leaders. We are change agents. We are compassionate. We are hopeful. We are mothers. We are daughters. We are sisters. We are professionals. We are believers. We are dream makers. We are a group of women who believe in the mission of the Junior League. We are women who are dedicated to improving the communities in which we live. We are women who give of our time, our resources, and our heart.

We are a powerful group of women who get things done. We are able to weather the storm, literally and figuratively, and find creative solutions to problems we may face. We are women who support, encourage, and uplift our communities and one another. Simply put – we are JL Savannah.

I am continually inspired by each of YOU and I am honored and humbled by the opportunity to serve as the president of the 2017-2018 league year.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” ~ Margaret Mead

Melissa Jackson

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2016-2017

community**advisory**board

Thank you for the following individuals who selflessly give their time to advise the **Junior League of Savannah** on various matters.



ARNOLD MARK BELZER DD

> **Former Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation Mickve Israel**

"What a pleasure to serve on the Advisory Board of the Junior League of Savannah which has contributed so much to the betterment of our community. The impressive and accomplished women of the League are surely a blessing to those on whose behalf they labor."



LINDA M. BLEICKEN, PH.D.

> **President, Armstrong State University**

Dr. Linda M. Bleicken joined Armstrong State University on July 1, 2009, becoming the seventh Armstrong president and the first woman to lead the institution since the establishment of Armstrong Junior College in 1935. President Bleicken holds Ph.D. and Master of Science degrees in management from Georgia State University. She earned her bachelor's degree in marketing magna cum laude, also from Georgia State. She serves on the boards of the Ossabaw Island Foundation and the Union Mission and is a member of the Savannah Rotary Club.



JOSEPH A. BUCK, III, ED.D.

> **Managing Partner, JBK Associates, LLC**

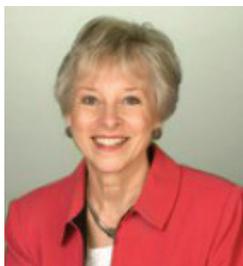
Dr. Joe Buck served at Armstrong State University for 39 years and during that time he served as the director of student affairs, dean of student affairs, vice president for student affairs and retired as vice president for student affairs emeritus. He has earned a number of awards including being named the Rotarian of the Year for the Savannah district, receiving the United Way Spirit of Volunteerism Award, is a Junior Achievement/Savannah Business Hall of Fame inductee and was the recipient of the Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce's elite General James Oglethorpe Leadership Award. Dr. Buck has volunteered as a Sunday school teacher at Isle of Hope United Methodist Church, former chair of the Administrative Board and Council on Ministries, president of Leadership Savannah, past trustee of the Georgia Public Education Foundation, past president of the Rotary Club of Savannah East and past chair of the board of directors and general campaign chairman for the United Way of the Coastal Empire. He is also president and chairman of the board of directors for Leadership Savannah and a former member of the board of directors for Leadership Savannah.



RICHARD A. COOMER

> **Managing Partner, Coomer, Coomer & Routhier CPAs, P.C.; ex-officio JLS accountant**

Richard serves as the certified public accountant for the JLS. He commented, "I am excited because I continue to see the Junior League growing in the right direction."



KATHY HORNE, ESQ.

> **Partner, Bouhan Falligant, LLP**

Kathleen Horne is a practicing attorney in Savannah. She has been named one of the "Top 50 Women Attorneys" in the State of Georgia by Atlanta magazine, a Georgia "Super Lawyer" and one of Georgia Trend magazine's "Legal Elite." She has received the Georgia Association of Women Lawyers Achievement Award and was named the Business and Professional Women's Club Woman of Achievement and the Judge Frank Cheatham Professionalism Award by the Savannah Bar Association. Kathleen received both her B.A. degree and J.D. degree, cum laude, from the University of Georgia. She remarked, "One of the things that impressed me the most when I was a member of the Junior League was the degree of organization, talent and energy exhibited by its members, and by the officers and committee chairs in particular. From my current vantage point, it appears that the Junior League is more successful now than ever before. It is an honor to serve on the Community Advisory Board for an organization so committed to our community and its citizens."



MICHAEL F. KEMP

> **Synovus Trust Company, N.A. Senior Vice President, Regional Trust Manager**

In addition to his position as Senior Vice President with Synovus Trust Company, Mike Kemp is active in our community with positions on the Boards of Armstrong Atlantic State University Foundation, Coastal Georgia Indicators Coalition, and as assistant treasurer for the Savannah Community Foundation. He has previously served on Savannah's Anti-Poverty Initiative (Step Up) and MedBank boards along with several others. Mr. Kemp earned his J.D. from Mercer University School of Law and is a member of the Georgia Bar Association.



DR. M. ANN LEVETT

> Deputy Superintendent, Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools

Dr. Ann Levett, recently selected as the next superintendent of the Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools, received her B.S. degree from Armstrong State University; her master's degree in special education, master's degree in public administration, and an educational specialist degree in educational administration from Georgia Southern University; doctorate in educational administration from the University of Georgia. She has been a professional educator for 41 years and is a Savannah native. Dr. Levett has been active in a leadership capacity with Junior Achievement, Girl Scouts USA, Boy Scouts USA, National Business and Professional Women, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Phi Delta Kappa, Zonta International, Education's Leadership Georgia, and Leadership Savannah. She has participated in leadership development programs at Harvard University, Vanderbilt University, the University of Delaware, the University of California, San Diego, and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.



JENNIFER V. MAFERA, ESQ.

> Partner, HunterMaclean

Jennifer Mafera is a practicing attorney and partner at HunterMaclean law firm in Savannah. She received her B.A. degree, summa cum laude, from the University of Georgia and her J.D. degree, cum laude, from the University of Georgia School of Law. She is a past president of Savannah Downtown Business Association and has been involved in the United Way, Coastal Georgia Chapter of the National Association of Women in Construction, Developers and Engineers Council, Georgia Association of Women Lawyers, Savannah Area Board of Realtors, and is a Member of Homebuilders Association of Greater Savannah and an Affiliate Member of Georgia Association of Convenience Stores. She is also a former member of the executive committee and former board member (secretary) of Susan G. Komen for the Cure Coastal Georgia Affiliate.



JULIA L. MIKELL, M.D.

> Director of Quality Performance at St. Joseph's/Candler

Prior to accepting her current position as Director of Quality Performance at St. Joseph's/Candler, Dr. Julia Mikell was a practicing neurologist and has been on the SJC Medical Staff for more than 30 years. Her leadership roles have included serving on the SJC Bylaws Committee, Bio-Ethics Committee, Candler Hospital Board of Trustees member, Foundations Board member, Credentials Committee Chair, and Candler Hospital Chief of Staff. She received a Doctorate of Medicine from the Medical College of Georgia, completed an Internal Medicine Internship at the Medical University of South Carolina, and a Neurology Residency at the Mayo Clinic. She reminisces that "the Junior League was critical in my early formation as a Savannahian. I met so many talented individuals and important organizations who do such good work in the community. I was able to try out lots of volunteer experiences. I hope I can be helpful on the Advisory Council by demonstrating to women that combining family, career, and volunteerism is do-able and tremendously rewarding."



THE REV. HELEN WHITE

> Assistant for Children and Family Ministries, Christ Church Episcopal

The Rev. Helen White currently serves as the Assistant for Children and Family Ministries at Christ Church Episcopal. Prior to serving at Christ Church, she served at All Saint's on Tybee Island, St. George's in Savannah, and as a chaplain to Armstrong State University. She is a graduate of Virginia Theological Seminary (M.Div.), Georgia Southern University (M.Ed.) and Furman University (BA in Religion). She remarks, "I am so impressed with the energetic commitment to service demonstrated by the members of the Junior League. It is inspiring to see such talented, diverse women mobilizing for the betterment of our community and in support of one another. I hope to offer community connection, ideas and most of all, encouragement by saying, 'Keep doing what you are doing!'"



J. REID WILLIAMSON, ESQ.

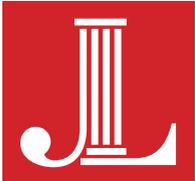
> Partner, HunterMaclean; ex-officio JLS Attorney

Reid Williamson has been a practicing attorney for more than 30 years and is a native to Savannah. He received his B.A. degree, magna cum laude, from Tufts University and his J.D. degree, cum laude, from the University of Georgia School of Law. Williamson is a graduate of Leadership Savannah and has served as the chairman of the Chatham County Board of Jury Commissioners, past president of the Savannah Estate Planning Council and is a member of the Georgia Bar Association and the Savannah Bar Association. He admired that "the League is the best local organization I know of that promotes positive, lifelong membership experiences for women and opportunities for their meaningful involvement in our community."

2016-2017

Communications Council Update

Submitted by: Wendy Owens, 2016-2017 Communications VP



OUR GOAL THIS YEAR WAS TO HAVE A MORE ACTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA AND MEDIA PRESENCE TO INFORM THE COMMUNITY OF WHAT JLS WAS AS WELL AS ENGAGE AND INSPIRE OUR MEMBERS. WE LAUNCHED THE NEW RESKINNING OF THE WEBSITE. IT IS MORE AESTHETICALLY PLEASING, MORE USER-FRIENDLY AND IT WILL WORK IN THE YEARS TO COME TO AID IN LEAGUE PROMOTION.

We created our own unique hashtag, which has inspired promotion through the community: **#wearejlsav**. JLS Facebook presence was increased by 230 followers and we increased the number of people overall who see the JLS posts by over 50%. We joined Facebook groups including the Chamber of Commerce in Savannah, Pooler, Golden Isles & Bluffton/HHI and implemented a Comprehensive Facebook campaign that included submissions and posts from every council, every committee, Provisionals, Sustainers, Leadership, SCLC Sustainers & activities, Golden Isles Activities, AJLI, GA-SPAC and included themes such as JLS History and Diversity. We employed a Facebook General Membership Meeting ["GMM"] Reminder Campaign and picture posts from the GMMs. We augmented the Instagram campaign by more than double the posts from the previous year and now have over 60 posts and 413 followers. We added a JLS President's Twitter account. We added a LinkedIn Page.

As for the Newsletter, we continued to build on our overall theme for membership engagement/inspiration. The pages were membership themed and focused on highlighting League community involvement and activity. We worked hard to find sponsorship to support the costs of implementation.

The communications council continues to send the weekly e-blast to 645 members. We were diligent this year to make the e-blasts more member-friendly by adding back in birthdays and member accomplishments. We implemented a Member Spotlight and JLS President's Blog to posts and tried to limit the e-blasts to only pertinent information so that our members were not inundated with emails.

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Community

2016-2017 PROJECTS & UPDATES



2016 COMMUNITY PARTNER OF THE YEAR AWARD

In February, the Junior League of Savannah was honored with the 2016 Community Partner of the Year Award from Greenbriar Children's Center in Savannah. The Center "Salute[s] all of your efforts on behalf of the families and children served by Greenbriar Children's Center in 2016: the preparation of 3,000 pieces of mail for bulk mailing; the sock drive for the women and children; and the planting of beautiful flowers at Greenbriar's administration building." 2016-2017 President-Elect Melissa Jackson attended the awards ceremony and received the award on behalf of JLS.



AMERICA'S SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK: BACK PACK BUDDIES

Submitted by: Mallory Whatley, 2016-2017 Back Pack Buddies Chair

We fed ninety six students from Garden City Elementary School every school Friday. Back Pack Buddies provides nutritious meals to children identified as living in extreme poverty, and significantly at risk to go hungry over the weekends. We included special items such as snacks, notes, games and seasonally themed items along with the nine meals per week. This vital program promotes our League mission of impacting K-12 student performance, as they truly need healthy meals in order to thrive at school.

During the winter holidays "Little Leaguers" created beautiful crafts to share with the students at Garden City Elementary. League members reached out during The National Read Out-Loud Day to read to many of the younger backpack recipients. To encourage students about the Georgia Milestones Test, we provided fruit snacks and oatmeal cookies with notes sharing our love that read "you are one smart cookie." For the summer pack students will receive extra food and summer items like sunglasses, bubbles, activity books, and jump ropes.



BUILD A BRIDGE FOUNDATION OF GEORGIA: DIVAS PROGRAM



The DIVAs program committee members continued to provide mentoring to girls ranging from 12 to 17 years old. As a JLS Community Partner, Build-A-Bridge's DIVA girls are inspired to excel in academics and create an action plan for higher education. Through sponsorship funded by JLS, DIVA ladies traveled to Atlanta earlier this year and were encouraged to start visualizing their futures and to be inspired while touring Spelman College & Clark Atlanta University, the CNN Center, and the Center for Civil and Human Rights.

In December, the DIVA girls took in some culture while attending the Moscow Ballet on its Savannah stop and enjoyed a unique dinner experience. JLS DIVA committee Co-Chair, Natasha Holmes, remarks that the "JLS has definitely made a difference in the lives of these young ladies. It is one thing to tell the girls about values, but it is much more impactful to show them."

Done in a Day

UPDATE

The volunteers on the Done in a Day committee have been hard at work completing four projects this year and providing almost \$3,000 of funds toward these projects as well as volunteer hours.

The first project of the League Year was **"Girls Engineer It! Day"** by the **Society of Women Engineers – Savannah Coastal Empire** on Saturday, September 17th. 8 volunteers attended and helped with registration, the expo, parking and in the classroom with activities. The goal of the project was to inspire students to consider a career in a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) area. Hope to show the students what colleges, companies, and organizations are here to help them succeed in that. Over 300+ middle and high School students attended the event.

10 volunteers attended the second project which was the **Telfair Art Fair** held on Saturday, November 12. Volunteers stretched their creative muscles by helping with children's expo art activities which included hands-on coloring, origami making, and tissue inspired stained glass. The Telfair Art Fair was an open air, free-to-the-public art fair with a children's activity. Its aim was to show the community that art is for everyone at any level. 3000 visitors visited the Fair over the weekend to experience the artists, and activities for children of all ages in the community.



The third DIAD project was the **Savannah Children's Museum Beautification Day** through the Coastal Heritage Society on Sunday, March 5th. 10 volunteers worked with staff members of the Children's Museum to assist with updating and improving exhibits and public spaces in the museum, and storage and work areas used by museum educators for program planning and materials storage. Activities included repainting select exhibit areas and components, building sturdy, easy-to-assemble shelving and organizing storage areas to maximize space and accessibility. Volunteers also assisted with cleaning, dusting and sweeping exhibit areas to give the museum a fresh, updated appearance. The Beautification Day helped the Children's Museum staff maintain the museum, helping to provide a clean, safe and engaging space to learn, explore and play. The Children's Museum annually sees over 21,000 visitors.

The last DIAD project of the 2016-2017 year was the **Fairy and Gnome Festival** at Oatland Island on Saturday, May 6th and welcomed all Junior League volunteers who were available. Volunteers assisted with many aspects of the festival including craft preparation, festival set-up, assisting children with craft projects and games, preparing food at the concession stand, trail monitoring and face painting. This nature-based event for the local community emphasizes the importance of outdoor play and appreciation of our natural world as well as creativity and art in nature. Families with young children in Chatham County and the surrounding area are the target attendees, with 1600 people attending last year.



Community Outreach

UPDATE

Submitted by: Gennie Long, 2016-2017 Community Outreach Chair

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE FUNDS

After receiving nearly double the number of applications for Community Assistance Funds as we did last year, we selected six organizations to receive grants totaling \$7,800. Although there were many worthy applicants, these applicants all strive to fulfill the current JLS focus of improving K-12 education performance in a variety of meaningful, intentional and creative ways.

Communities in Schools of Savannah was awarded \$2,500 to help pay for two Americorp reading tutors at Haven Elementary school that will provide approximately 50 hours of individualized tutoring to 40 children each week.

Urban Hope, Inc. was awarded \$1,300 to fund materials and resources for their summer-long enrichment camp for 120 at-risk children in grades K-8. The Urban Hope summer camp includes classes in literacy, fine arts painting and gardening. Horizons Savannah was awarded \$1,000 for their academic and recreational 8 week summer camp program that also serves 219 at-risk children in grades K-8 to prevent summer learning loss and teach life skills such as swimming to all of their participants.

Mercy Housing Southeast was awarded \$1,000 for activities and materials for their "Out-of-School Time" programs which involve tutoring, after-school programs, camps, and SAT-prep.

Georgia Historical Society was awarded \$1,000 for equipment to film educational videos (Sophia's Schoolhouse) on Georgia history for K-12 classrooms. The goal is to share some of the primary sources in the Georgia Historical Society archives with students through videos.

Savannah Music Foundation – Musical Explorers was awarded \$1,000 for their K-2 music education program benefitting 10,701 area children that incorporates music exercises into literacy, mathematics and social studies.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

The JLS recently approved four Community Projects for the 2017-2018 league year! We are excited to partner with the following community organizations to enhance K-12 education performance in our community.

America's Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia – Backpack Buddies Backpack Buddies serves low-income children at risk for hunger by providing 96 Garden Elementary students with food over the weekend. This project runs from September 2017 – May 2018.

Junior League of Savannah – Fit Kids Fest - The JLS 6th annual Fit Kids Fest will once again serve over 700 children by promoting wellness at a free one-day event for students in grades K-12 in the spring of 2018.

Build-A-Bridge – DIVAs Program - DIVAs is a mentoring program held during the school year for young women and currently serves around 100 middle and high school students.

Frank M. Callen Boys & Girls Club – The Amazing Ultimate Journey - The Amazing Ultimate Journey is an after-school program that teaches 100 children ages 9-12 about the environment, various cultures and global natural resources through music, games, crafts and discovery-based activities.

KIDS WHO CARE SCHOLARSHIP

The Kids Who Care Scholarship applications are complete and we had an extraordinary group of applicants! The top candidates were interviewed and the winners were announced at the May GMM and will be published in the Fall/Annual issue of Coastal Columns.

Public Affairs

UPDATE

As year 1 of the 2017-2018 Legislative Session wraps up, SPAC representatives from all 12 Georgia Junior Leagues were proud to welcome several key lawmakers, including JLS's Georgia State Senator, 1st District Ben Watson and Georgia State Representative, District 166 Jesse Petrea, to GA-SPAC Capitol Day. Held on March 15 at the Georgia State Capitol, GA-SPAC and Georgia Junior League members (including 2016-2017 Public Affairs Chair **Yuantalay Gadson**) gathered to learn about legislation affecting women and children. They were given the opportunity to advocate on these issues to local State Representatives and to tour the Capitol. Participants posed in a group photo with Governor Nathan Deal in the Capitol building and left Capitol Day with insight into GA SPAC's work as it represents over 8,000 JL members across the State.



Yuantalay Gadson met with Senator Ben Watson and Representative Jesse Petrea.





Fit Kids Fest
 FIT MINDS. FIT BODIES. FIT KIDS.
 a JUNIOR LEAGUE OF SAVANNAH event

The Junior League of Savannah recently celebrated their 5th Annual Fit Kids Fest, which was planned and executed by a hard-working committee consisting of **Valerie Martinez (Co-Chair), Natalia Gusching (Co-Chair), Brittany Hobbs, Kristen Russom, Amy Smith, Brittnee Branham, Misty Thompson, Kelin Murphy, Laura Farless, Kathy Bellios, Marilyn Molkenthin, Allie Howard, and Sara Jernigan** – with guidance from Jennifer Grafton (Vice President Community Council). The event was held on Saturday February 25th at the Jennifer Ross Soccer Complex. More than 240 local children and their caregivers from over 50 area schools attended the event to learn about healthy food choices, how to keep active physically and mentally, and interacted with many engaging activities provided by the Junior League and over 30 exhibitors consisting of local organizations and businesses.

The Junior League of Savannah annually focuses its support on a variety of community projects, committing financial support of more than \$100,000 and thousands of volunteer hours in an effort to fulfill our mission of improving the community through effective action and leadership. One of those community projects is Fit Kids Fest. **The mission of Fit Kids Fest is to promote fit minds and bodies in K-12 children through interactive education and healthy lifestyle resources, in partnership with local organizations for a free annual community event.** During the 2014-2015 school year, Chatham County 4th grade students performed 37% & 40% below the Georgia average for proficiency in language arts and math, respectively. Additionally, Georgia's childhood obesity rate is the 17th highest in the United States. Some studies suggest that obesity is associated with poorer academic performance beginning as early as kindergarten. Statistics show that children who are more active and eat healthier exhibit better attention spans, fewer behavior problems, and are more academically successful. Thus, our goal with Fit Kids Fest is to improve our community's K-12 academic performance and childhood health awareness through a free family event.

This year the team was tasked with incorporating the

Junior League of Savannah's new educational K-12 focus into a traditionally "fitness & health" focused event. They started by creating an innovative tag line that was used in all event marketing "Fit Minds. Fit Bodies. Fit Kids." The tag line helped tie the education and health themes together. The team allocated new roles on the committee, Education Directors, to focus on reaching community organizations that could provide an educational component to the event. A new partnership was leveraged with **Communities in Schools of Savannah** to help expand reach and bring in additional vendors. Communities in Schools of Savannah's mission - to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life – sets the stage for The Junior League of Savannah to partner with an organization who seeks to positively impact Savannah's youth and their families.

The JLS Fit Kids Fest committee worked many hours to plan the logistics of the event, to bring in sponsors and exhibitors of the event, to plan engaging activities for the participants, and to market the event to the community and to the area schools. More than 50 JLS provisionals, actives, and sustainers volunteered at Fit Kids Fest. The committee raised \$4,000 in monetary sponsorships from **Cross Fit Hy-performance Savannah, OrthoNow, Coastal ENT (David Oliver, M.D.), WellCare, Savannah Construction & Preservation Group, Amerigroup, Chatterbox Pediatric Therapy, Clinical Consulting Consortium, ExperCare, Bart, Meyer & Company LLP, Chatham Orthopaedics** and well over \$4,000 worth of in-kind donations. Businesses and organizations that provided in-kind donations were the following: **Chatham County Parks and Recreation** donated the use of the soccer complex and countless resources to make the event a success; **Massive Events** provided the tent rentals; **Trisha Cook Realty** provided use of a moving truck for logistical needs; **Fabcon** provided an exciting addition for this year's event - a stage which hosted multiple performances, the raffle, and our emcee **Mia Amini** from **Alpha Media**; Alpha Media provided radio promotional marketing and emcee services for

the day of; **Whole Foods of Savannah** donated the ingredients for cooking demonstrations; **Lucky's Market** donated fruit and water for our volunteers and exhibitors; **Enmarket** donated granola bars and bananas to provide to kids as a healthy snack to refuel during the event; Tanya Glaize, a prior League member, donated a significant amount of teacher gift cards; **Planet Fitness** donated black card yearly memberships for the raffle; **Perry Roof, LLC** donated the cost to have Split, the Savannah Banana's mascot, at the event; **Monkey Joe's** donated family passes and a prize pack for the raffle; the **Savannah Bananas** baseball team donated a fan pack to give away in the raffle; and **Banana Graphics** designed and printed the event and volunteer t-shirts at a reduced cost to the event

The Fit Kids Fest committee would like to thank all of the sponsors, all of the exhibitors, and all of the JLS volunteers who helped to provide this free event to the community.



2016 FIT KIDS FEST EXHIBITORS:

- Junior League of Savannah
- Communities in Schools of Savannah
- Chatham County Parks & Recreation
- 1st Tee of Savannah
- Alpha Media
- Armstrong Recreation Department
- Coastal ENT
- COPE – Childhood Obesity Prevention and Education
- Cross Fit Hyperformance
- EnMarket
- Farm Truck 912
- FIT4MOM Stroller Strides
- Georgia Forestry Commission
- Girls on the Run Coastal Georgia
- Goodwill (Rock wall)
- H.L. Franklin's Healthy Honey
- Healthy Savannah
- Islands YMCA
- Legacy Irish Dancers
- Live Oak Public Libraries
- Local Farmbag
- Mathnasium Learning Center
- Memorial Children's Hospital
- Monkey Joe's
- OrthoNow
- Party Harbor (Battle Balls & Bounce House)
- Planet Fitness
- Savannah Bananas
- Savannah Yoga Center
- Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools Department of Health and Physical Education
- SCAD
- Skidaway Island State Park
- St. Joseph's Candler African American Health Center
- Sylvan Learning Center
- Urban Hope, Inc.
- West Chatham YMCA
- Whole Foods
- YFACE – Youth For a Cleaner Environment, Inc.



2016-2017

Fit Kids Fest Facts

- * 557 total participants
- * 240 kids
- * 146 adults
- * 51 JLS volunteers
- * 120 Booth/Activity volunteers
- * 52 different schools represented
- * 41 Booths & Activities
- * 33 various community organizations
- * 27 sponsors (11 monetary, 2 signature, 14 in-kind)
- * \$4,000 in monetary sponsorships raised
- * Over \$4,000 in in-kind donations received

Schools with the most participants:
Hesse K-8 and Spencer Elementary,
 Winners of free new sports equipment and gift cards for teachers

Finance update

Submitted by: Jen McKenzie, 2016-2017 Treasurer

The women on this year's Finance Council were definitely a roll-up-your-sleeves-and-get-to-work bunch! Which is no surprise, since they are part of a League that was willing to do the same and has proved it this year. On behalf of the Finance Council I would like to thank the entire League for the support shown throughout the 2016-2017 year.

While there will always be obstacles to raising funds to support our mission (and our Council certainly had its share), each committee chair overcame those obstacles with the grace and willingness to adapt that one would expect of Junior League women. Anyone who has ever been involved with the Thrift Sale Committee knows that spending a week in the Civic Center is difficult enough, but this year's committee worked for a total of three weeks! Despite the original sale being thwarted by Hurricane Matthew, **Abby Johnson** remained positive and inspired her committee to take action. Simply having a sale later in December and recovering the costs would have been acceptable, but this committee went above and beyond to ensure at least some money would be raised to support our mission. Thank you again to every League member that gave extra time and financial support to Thrift Sale!



The Masquerade and Auction also had to be rescheduled, but we discovered that early Spring is a wonderful time to host this event. The Committee leaders **Jennifer Wise** (2016-2017 Chair) and **Vanessa Asterman** (2016-2017 Chair-Elect) were examples of true dedication. The Brice hotel provided a pristine backdrop to the smiles, laughter, and music that characterized the evening. The total gross funds raised from Thrift Sale and Masquerade combined exceeded \$70,000.

Cookbook also had an outstanding year, the committee raising over \$20,000. These volunteers expanded our reach of resellers as well as local events and opportunities to increase promote the newest cookbook. Annual Fund completely raised the bar this year, achieving nearly double their fundraising goal. In its second year as a JLS fundraiser, The Little Black Dress Initiative was a huge success, netting nearly \$13,000 and raising awareness on the effects of poverty at the same time. Additionally Annual Fund created a JLS branded "Volunteer" Shirt to be worn in the community, partnered with Communications Council to sell Tervis Tumblers, and worked Belk Charity Days to provide financial support for the League. Thank you to every sustainer, active, and provisional member that participated.

One final admirable aspect of this year's Finance Council is the number of first- and second-year actives stepping up into leadership – 5 total! It is remarkable to see bold women taking on leadership roles, knowing that they will receive training and support from the League. For our graduating provisionals and new actives, please consider the Junior League as an amazing and supportive place to hone and develop your leadership skills.

As we look forward to 2017-2018 year, we remember all the women that have paved the way in the last 90 years. We are truly standing on the shoulders of giants! I wish all of you a wonderful and relaxing summer!

Own a piece of Junior League of Savannah history



The Junior League of Savannah's first cookbook, *Savannah Style* was first printed in 1980. It has been placed in the *Southern Living* Hall of Fame. There are almost 200,000 copies in print today. The cover image is by Ray Ellis featuring a low country oyster roast.

The fourth and newest book, *On the Squares Savannah Style*, features 140 triple-tested recipes. All of the photography found in the book was done by Junior League of Savannah member Katie Joyner.

100% of cookbook and cookbook merchandise profits go to funding the Junior League of Savannah's community projects.

To order your cookbooks, email cookbook@jrleaguesav.org, or call (912) 790-0222. Visit the website www.jrleaguesav.org any time for additional information.




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The Masquerade and Auction is an annual event hosted by the Junior League of Savannah and the public is welcome to attend. This year's Masquerade, held at the Brice hotel, was rescheduled from the fall to February due to Hurricane Matthew, but it still proved to be a lucrative fundraiser for the League. The proceeds from this event help enable the JLS volunteers to accomplish about 20 community impact projects every League year in the greater Savannah area, Golden

Isles, and South Carolina Lowcountry. Jennifer Wise and Vanessa Asterman took the lead in organizing Masquerade this year along with their committee and with assistance from generous sponsors (shown above). Be sure to make plans to attend the next Masquerade and look out for details in the next issue of Coastal Columns, on the Junior League of Savannah website, and weekly e-mails sent to members.



The 69th Annual JUNIOR LEAGUE OF SAVANNAH THRIFT SALE



“How can we generate more money? The only people to do this, is us! And so I graciously welcome any options, opinions, anything you can bring to the table to make our league better, let’s do it! ... I mean I’m on board, Dawn’s on board, that’s why we are here. So come on, whatever you have to offer, let’s do it!” - *Laura McKenzie Thrift Sale 2016-2017 Chair-Elect*



The Junior League of Savannah Thrift Sale committee is active in their role throughout the entire year. Committee members have the opportunity to learn new skills, meet new people and are part of an exciting team. Under this year’s leadership of Chair Abby Johnson and Chair-Elect Laura McKenzie, the Thrift Sale committee continued its focus on collecting quality items over quantity by expanding the boutique section and not accepting large appliances or women’s clothing. Few times before, though, has it been more exciting than this League year, when over 30 League members and their families (and even members of the community) worked together to pack up and load hundreds of boxes filled with priced merchandise that League members had already brought to the Civic Center. Halfway through the week of preparing for “Thrift Sale, Take One,” residents

Chatham County received orders to evacuate and the City of Savannah needed the use of the Civic Center. The volunteers packed containers full and transported the boxes of thrift items to generously-donated storage spaces that became available on short notice.

Fast forward to December 10th and the 69th annual Thrift Sale was “open for business.” Thanks to League members who worked additional pricing and sale shifts, “Thrift Sale, Take Two” was a success. The Preview Sale and main sale both had a steady stream of shoppers with the added bonus of those shoppers being able to shop for the holidays. The Junior League of Savannah has been and continues to be the largest fundraiser and a pesky hurricane named Matthew did not stop the Thrift Sale’s success this year.





In addition to the valuable time that League members volunteer to make the Thrift Sale a success, the Thrift Sale committee members contribute their time by attending one planning meeting per month, participate in bulk pick-ups, work Thrift Sale before and after the main sale, and help clear out the Civic Center after the sale. In addition, committee members receive the benefits of learning to manage their time better, learn negotiation and leadership skills, and networking within the League.

For more information about Thrift Sale (the committee meets year-round), contact Laura McKenzie (2017-2018 Thrift Sale Chair) lauramckenzie07@gmail.com or Dawn Poe (2017-2018 Thrift Sale Chair-Elect) @ dpoekincaid@hotmail.com.

Special Shout-Outs for Thrift Sale 2016

{ Over half of JLS members (including actives, sustainers, and provisionals) volunteered **327 additional hours.** }

{ Thrift obligation donated by JLS members was exceeded by **\$62,918.88.** }

{ The total gross profit was **\$46,481.48.** }

And just a few of the JLS members who went the extra mile...

Melanie Finnegan	Ashley Vaughan	Jami Brantley	Jessica Thomas	Andrea Ponder
Katie Joyner	Jaclyn Velardo	& parents	Wendy Owens	Hope Dooley
Tanya Glaize	Annette Gubert	Cecilia Nix	Melissa Jackson	Meredith Halloran
DeAnne Mitchell	Laura McKenzie	Liz Balkcom	Maria Davis	
Misty Thompson	Jan Johnson	& husband Brian	Jennifer McKenzie	
Jennifer Brownell	Alisha Goldbach	JJ. Dental	& husband Drew	
Audra Taylor	Katie Hurley	Chelsea Phillips	Lisa Muller	
Kathy Ledvina	Kerry Coursey	Dawn Poe	Jennifer Grafton	
Vanessa Asterman	& daughter and her friend	Rebecca Strawn	& daughter Olivia	

Thank you to all League members for being bright in the community!

Annual & Endowment Fund RECAP

Submitted by: Audra Taylor, 2016-2017 Annual & Endowment Fund Chair



The Annual and Endowment Fund Committee had a fun, successful year full of events – some old favorites, some new. We kicked off the year by introducing this year’s Endowment campaign – “Keep the Light Shining” – at the September GMM and a Sustainer event. We also continued our partnership with Belk by participating in two Belk Charity Day events and also holding our annual Holidash event at Belk. Fall Charity Day and Holidash combined raised nearly \$3,000 for Annual Fund. Kendra Scott invited us to join them again this year – this time celebrating their one-year anniversary. This give back event raised over \$1300. A new League t-shirt was designed and sold this year thanks to Annual Fund. Now when we’re working out in the community we can easily be

identified as JLS Volunteers. Annual Fund’s big Spring fundraiser this year was the Little Black Dress Initiative. LBDI began last year, but this year’s committee made some changes and expansions with the goal of not only raising poverty awareness, but also fundraising for the League and advertising our amazing members and all we accomplish. The Initiative was a resounding success, shattering our goals of 50 members participating and \$10,000 raised. In the end, we had 61 League members participate and we netted \$12,990. We are excited to hopefully make this a new Spring tradition for Annual Fund. Thank you to everyone who participated, volunteered, and donated in our various events throughout the year. We had a lot of fun!



League members enjoy the success of the Little Black Dress Initiative.

Membership

WELCOME 2016-2017 TRANSFERS

In 2016-2017, the Junior League of Savannah welcomed over 30 transfers from other Leagues. New transfers were welcomed with girls' nights out and socials. These women are valuable to JLS, as they bring with them their volunteer and leadership experience and great ideas from other Leagues around the country.

ACTIVES – SAVANNAH GROUP

Maria Noble
Jeanine Horsley
Amy Smith
Mary Balkcom
Gwinna Cahal
Margaret Lightsey
Brooke Phillips
Kathryn Mason
Margaret Jackovich
Jasmane Brown
Tametta Gray

ACTIVES – GOLDEN ISLES GROUP

Brooke Blews
Jennifer Morrow
Katherine Highsmith

ACTIVES – SC LOWCOUNTRY GROUP

Adrienne Kastan

SUSTAINER – SAVANNAH GROUP

Katherine Hamm
Meredith Mathis
Susan Prutzman
Milli Sample

SUSTAINER – GOLDEN ISLES GROUP

Barbara Fuller
Robin Churchill
Lynn Sechler

SUSTAINER – SC LOWCOUNTRY

Teresa Jackson
Rosanne Ball
Drew Atherton
Trudy Nelson
Janet Rivers
Lesley Green
Ann Hoag
Linda Calahan
Theresa Jehle
Margaret Paules

PROVISIONAL – SAVANNAH GROUP

Adele Stewart
Alexis Hamilton



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JLS BRINGS BACK

"Little Leaguers"

Over a decade ago, the Little Leaguers was a formal program within JLS, but the formal program was discontinued. The children of League members, though, have continued to serve throughout the years and the need was seen to bring back the Little Leaguers program, especially with the focus of the League being to help improve K-12 education. Led by **Wendy Owens** and **Jennifer Grafton**, this is a group of children whose mothers are members of JLS and are interested in volunteering in their own way. This year with Thrift Sale some of these kids even felt like they lived at the Civic Center for approximately 2 1/2 to 3 weeks and spent their "evacuation break" from school at Thrift Sale helping to store and move our thrift! In addition, the kids had fun participating in structured and fun activities added just for them.

In October, the Little Leaguers created small ornament gifts for the holidays to include with our Back Pack Buddies food to help the children we serve at Garden City Elementary School know that they are special and that the members of the League and Little Leaguers care about them. Earlier this year, some of the Little Leaguers participated in the Little Black Dress Initiative by helping their moms share the message on social media of Junior League and helped in asking friends to donate to support us.

In March, the Little Leaguers, along with their pets, visited senior citizens residing at Rivers Edge Retirement Community to share St. Patrick's Day "holiday" cheer. The kids wore St. Patrick's Day outfits and passed out stickers, candy, and beads and shared their beloved pets with the residents.

There are many opportunities for the League children to be involved in helping to make our community brighter. Look for information at the beginning of the next League year for more upcoming Little Leaguer activities. Grandchildren, nieces, nephews and family friends are welcome to get involved as well.



Thank you Little Leaguers (and moms) for your time!

Lindsey Eberle's children, Owen and Lauren

Jennifer Grafton's daughter, Olivia

Wendy Owens's son, Wyatt

Jennifer McKenzie's sons, Jackson and Beau

Theresa Adcock's children, Joey and Mea

Margaret Walton's daughter, Montgomery

Maria Noble's children, Andy and Kayla

Katie Joyner's daughter, Steele Anne

Melanie Finnegan's son, Patrick

Lisa Muller's children, Jadon and Rosie

Melissa Jackson's daughters, Alaina and Isabella

Members at a Glance



Members toured the Southbound Brewing Company in April. A portion of the proceeds raised during tours were donated to JLS.



Bernadette Bryant, Jessica Thomas, and Brooke Lozier representing the Junior League of Savannah at the Association of Junior Leagues International in Raleigh, North Carolina.



Members attending the Islands February small group membership meeting.



In January, JLS members attended the Build a Bridge Foundation of Georgia 3rd Anniversary Gala celebrating DIVA girls and families that have benefitted from the Foundation's services in the community.



JLS Golden Isles members volunteered at America's Second Harvest.



Potential JLS Golden Isles members attend a recruitment social at a member's home.



League members enjoy a night out in Hilton Head.



Members attended the One Year Anniversary party at Kendra Scott where a generous portion of the sales from that evening were donated to JLS.

Provisionals UPDATE

Submitted by: Brooke Lozier, 2016-2017 Provisional Chair



SAVANNAH PROVISIONALS

The members of the Junior League of Savannah Provisional class collected travel-size hygiene products to assemble 300 Confidence Kits to Horizons to distribute when school breaks for the summer. Since CONFIDENCE has a correlation with classroom success, the project goal to support confidence of Savannah youth with a kit of essential hygiene items to feel their best every day.

State Bank & Trust believes in their local community, and a generous donation was received in support of the Confidence Kits.

SOUTH CAROLINA LOWCOUNTRY/HILTON HEAD ISLAND PROVISIONALS

On April 8th 2017, the SC Lowcountry Provisionals and their fearless leader, Active Member Lisa Horton, went to Hopeful Horizons shelter for families and victims of domestic violence for their Spring Project.

A great time was had by all. All of the SC Lowcountry Provisionals participated to make the project a success. **Alex Joseph, Cara Daley, Lisa Horton, Nancy Downing-Schloss** and **Anne Caywood** went to the shelter to deliver an Easter themed lunch, Easter baskets for the children, books and magazines (provided by the Sustainers) and personal hygiene items for the adult residents who are mainly women.

The Provisionals had a particularly meaningful interaction with one brave woman and her toddler age child. It meant the world to see that young child smile while finding Easter eggs and enjoying some yummy chocolate treats.

Hopeful Horizons, formerly CODA and Hope Haven, provides legal and counseling services as well as shelter to victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse. For more information -- go to www.codalowcountry.org.



Junior League of the Golden Isles School Supply Drive & Happy Hour

Thursday, May 18
Gnat's Landing
4:00-6:00



GOLDEN ISLES PROVISIONALS

The Junior League of Savannah – Golden Isles Provisionals are supporting local elementary schools with much needed school supplies. They are collecting school supply donations during a Happy Hour at Gnat's Landing on Thursday, May 18th from 4-6pm. Donation suggestions include crayons, folders, highlighters, pencils, markers, and erasers. The collected school supplies will be assembled into Teacher Support Kits.

**Editor's note: Amanda Walker was inadvertently omitted as a Provisional Committee Advisor in the Fall/Annual issue. She was indeed a Provisional Committee Advisor at the time of printing and during the 2016-2017 year and the Editor apologizes to Amanda and the readers for this oversight.*

Savannah SUSTAINERS

Submitted by: Melanie Finnegan,
2016-2017 Sustainers Activities Co-Chair

WHAT A YEAR IT HAS BEEN! This year, the JLS Sustainers Activity Committee has worked to reenergize the group and remind us all about the League's unending commitment to the community. We hope that you have noticed our attempts at improved communication and wider variety of events. We have enjoyed monthly meet-ups, a Welcome Back cocktail party and the Annual Luncheon. We have also raised money for the Endowment Fund by holding a walking tour and supported the Active JLS members by volunteering at the Fit Kids Fest. Finally, we were able to award \$1,000 in grant money to local charities that share the League's focus on child welfare and enrichment. Savannah Sustainers love our League and are excited to continue supporting the League and our community. Stay tuned for more adventures next year!



> In April, Savannah Sustainers enjoyed a private guided walking tour through the Downtown Savannah squares led by JLS member Colleen Willoughby.

South Carolina Lowcountry SUSTAINERS

The Junior League of Savannah's South Carolina Lowcountry Sustainers have had a wonderful year including surviving Hurricane Matthew! September arrived with a wonderful "Welcome Back" party to which we invited all the Actives and Provisionals in Hilton Head and Bluffton as our guests. One of the goals of our sustainer group has been to support the Actives and Provisionals. We have provided items for the Auction, paid for a Provisional basket, made cookies for their Backpack buddies project, hosted a Provisional Education meeting for new members, etc. Our "Angel fund" has provided new members with the \$65 Provisional Education fee for those requesting it since 2013-2014. This year we are fortunate to be able to provide all new Provisionals here with the full \$65 amount.

In December, the Boys and Girls Club requested our help to wrap presents. Our Sustainers jumped right in and 19 people had everything wrapped in an hour! Our monthly programs were exceptional. They included the Make-A-Wish Foundation honoring a recipient, an afternoon with Maestro John Morris Russell, and ended with our education on the Sea Turtles and their nesting habits. Along with honorariums to some of our speakers, we donated \$1000 from the JLS SC-LC Sustainers to Project SAFE. Project SAFE is a program dedicated to providing sewers to all areas of Hilton Head Island.

Submitted by: Mona Ridge, Sustainer



Training & Education UPDATE

Submitted by: Tanya Chisholm, 2016-2017 Training & Education Chair

The Training and Education Committee is all about helping our members learn. The Fall Leadership Training was held February 4, 2017 and featured keynote speaker **Susan Hancock of Abshire Public Relations**, as well as **Step-Up Savannah Poverty Simulation**.

The Poverty Simulation demonstration was well received. This tool was able to help our members rethink the challenges that millions of low-income individuals must face each and every day. More importantly, they saw how this tool helps people identify areas of change that can directly impact the effects of poverty on individuals, families and communities. Participants were encouraged and empowered about the training and new leadership skills for their professional and personal growth. This training also helped to define leadership for themselves in the many roles they occupy in society.

We hope this training and future training will ignite women to go out into their world and make it a better place for them, their families and our community. We look forward to seeing all of our JLS members at the Spring Leadership Conference on June 4, 2017 at University of Phoenix.



Strategic Planning UPDATE

Submitted by: Beth Longley, 2016-2017 Strategic Planning Chair

The Strategic Planning Committee has been hard at work this year. We wrote the Junior League of Savannah's 2017-2020 Strategic Plan with input from our leadership and membership, which was accepted by this year's Board. Our Committee also spent the year working on a plan to update our rules to comply with the impending Governance Management Rollout.

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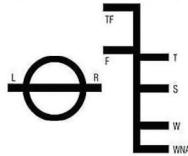
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