

Lagniappe

Junior League of New Orleans

Winter 2016



Diapers, Disaster and Dogma

JLNO Called into Action

Hosting a Successful,
Stress-Free Holiday Party

Back to Basics:
Dieting Dilemmas

Where are they now:
Community Assistance Fund
Grant Recipients



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On the Cover

Diaper Bank Committee Chairs Chalón Dominick and Meredith Beers and Vice Chairs Caroline Phillips and Laura Mintz respond to the floods of 2016 by packaging thousands of diapers to send to those in need. *Photo by: Michelle Sens*

Letter from the President



Photo by: Jessica Bachmann

It is incomprehensible to me that we are already at the winter issue of *Lagniappe*. These past few months have flown by and have been action packed.

The theme that overlays all of the months of activity is that of learning through leadership. Part of the mission of the Junior League of New Orleans is to “develop the potential of women.” At the core of that statement is the belief that as women we all have the unlimited potential to expand our horizons, test our limits and discover hidden talents while making an impact in our community. People unfamiliar with the League and its mission are astounded that it is run completely by volunteers – including the executive board – and that we have been that way for almost 93 years.

While part of that longevity is rooted in the training and development of leadership in our members, the other part of it is in the peer to peer support we give to one another. A past-president once said to me after I had made a mistake, “We learn as we lead,” which freed me from the self-blame and allowed me to absorb the lesson I had learned. Whether it is encouraging a shy leader to speak at a meeting or being positive when another leader takes a calculated risk that may not be fruitful, we should always as members build other women up. That support is necessary as we sometimes lick our wounds when something didn’t turn out right or wasn’t perfect. Success for us as an organization will not always be measured in the dollars raised or projects completed but in the confidence and poise we hope to instill in our members to take the risk of occasional failure in order to build future successes. Risk is scary but I think that sometimes that can be the only way you know what you are truly capable of. The Junior League offers that safe space for our members to learn as they lead and I am grateful for those women who emulated that for me.

My mother used to tell me, “You have more guts than sense.” While my husband may occasionally agree, I am grateful for that quality as this year has progressed. I am not sure that I was 100 percent convinced that I could drive a fully loaded 20-foot U-Haul truck to deliver flood relief, but I had two seemingly fearless co-pilots with strong constitutions as support in the truck. We all had a determination to get the job done. We had no clue what we were getting ourselves into with that 11-hour trek, but we knew that people were counting on us and that as JLNO members we stood by our word to get it there. On that long day, we learned through leadership about the beauty of giving, our limits, each other and Airline Highway traffic. (I am still sorry about that messy U-turn!) That is a memory I will treasure for years.

As we transition from one year to the next, the inevitable self-reflection and goal setting begins. I know that I will be busy making sure that we are accomplishing what we set out to do this League year and that we finish strong. My challenge to our members is to find that one thing that makes you a little nervous because it’s new or stretches what you think you are capable of and then do it. We are here for you and I can’t wait to hear about it.

This issue is jam packed with stories of our flood relief efforts, projects we are working on, useful tips for healthier living and member profiles. As you peruse the pages, please note the leaders- all volunteers- who are putting themselves out there to develop their potential, improve our community and make a difference.

Gratefully,

Maria Pardo Huete

Maria Pardo Huete
Junior League of New Orleans President 2016-2017



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Letter from the Editor



Photo by: Jessica Bachmann

In modern society, anxiety is often an accompaniment to the months leading up to the holiday season. Anxiety is a chronic issue for many people, and its causes range from poor eating habits to the pressure of family commitments to everything in between. Our work with JLNO makes our community a little better, and reducing our anxiety by taking care of ourselves is necessary to carry out that mission.

In this issue, we're making an effort to combat anxiety with an examination of the wellbeing of women. We've investigated fad diets, profiled fitness studios in the city and provided a primer for learning to meditate. We're also diving into wellbeing by looking at the circumstances around natural disasters and their after effects. After the unprecedented flooding in August, JLNO's leadership swooped in to meet needs and relieve anxiety for the victims. We'll tell the inspiring story of how our members and leaders came to the rescue. I'm inspired by these women who just wanted to make the world a little better, a little brighter, by bringing diapers up the Mississippi River to women and children in need and relieving a little anxiety in the process.

The holidays themselves can be a source of anxiety with the rat race demanding ever-increasing limits for gifts and parties. The diversity of JLNO's membership provides us with a great source of inspiration for a variety of calming holiday traditions. We'll learn about the unique traditions of a few of our members and hopefully inspire new traditions in your families. JLNO's diversity also ensures we can have a robust conversation on the complicated issue of race relations in our region, and our Diversity and Inclusion Committee hosted an inspiring event to kick off that conversation.

Talking about anxiety isn't pleasant. However, when we talk about ways to lessen anxiety, it's easier to grasp that we're all in this together trying to make the world a slightly better place for each other. I hope you find something in this issue that aids you overcoming any anxiety and enjoying the celebrations of the season. Keep making the world a little better and inspiring us all to do the same.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lea Purl'.

Lea Witkowski-Purl

Lagniappe Editor 2016-2017

P.S. I like to remind myself that every day is an opportunity for learning by making mistakes, and I recently proved it to myself once again. In our last issue, we ran a story called Sip'n Shop about the provisional class. While we featured photos of this year's class, the rest of the article was from last year and was written by Katy Darrith. I apologize for the error, and I thank Marion Newsom for bringing it to my attention. This year's provisional class is composed of 120 amazing new members. I can't wait to see what things they will accomplish or what I'll learn today.

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NEW MEMBER INFORMATION:

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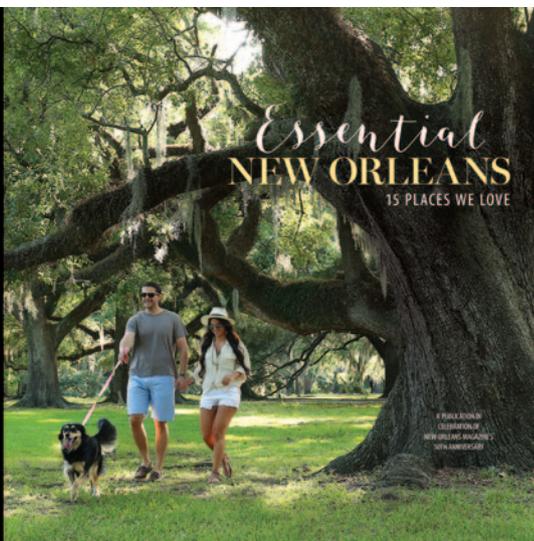
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Bonjour, mes amis!

By Kristin Durand

In Louisiana, when we see our fellow man in distress, we can't help fast enough. When you saw the devastation the August floods brought to our friends in Baton Rouge, it's likely your first instinct was to help those in need. When tragedy strikes, it can be difficult to know how to tactfully help and how much is too much.

It's important to remember that everyone copes differently. Some people throw themselves into repairs so they can get back to normal as quickly as possible. Others may be overwhelmed and won't know where to begin. Still others could need time to process everything and may decline your well-intentioned assistance, so don't take offense if your help is initially rebuffed.

Maria Pardo Huete, Junior League of New Orleans President, said, "Take your cue from the person suffering on how to help. Ask them specifically what they need so you can address their most pressing needs, bearing in mind it may not be things they need; it may be a helping hand."

If you're the person in need, remember that an offer of help can be rewarding for both you and the person helping. "People truly just want to help you and it can be very overwhelming but even if you just say, 'will you answer the phone for me while I take a shower,' 'please pick up my children from school' you will find your burdens lessened," Maria said.

It's also worth noting the need for help may not dissipate with time. Some of the hardest challenges don't arise until several weeks or months have passed. That's when speed bumps like insurance, contract work and especially emotional fatigue start to sink in. Erin Alexander Bolles, Director

of Institutional Advancement with Catholic Charities and JLNO Sustainer said, "Our clients are no different than all of us...we all need to know we matter to someone, particularly during the most vulnerable moments in life." It's never too late to reach out and offer to treat a friend to lunch or help them paint a newly sheetrocked room.

Once the immediate threat has passed, the community bands together to continue the help on a larger scale. Consider volunteering your time to groups like the New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity. "When someone comes to volunteer with NOAHH, they can expect a really fun day!" said Avery Strada, Director of Volunteer Services at the New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity. "They will be assisting in building a brand new home in partnership with a NOAHH partner family or they will be working on a home repair project through our A Brush with Kindness program. With both opportunities, they will leave feeling a sense of contribution and gratitude."

You may also consider donating to a local non-profit organization that will assist your community both now and in future recovery efforts. "Planned giving is one of the easiest ways to support a nonprofit. Leaving a gift in your will is a meaningful and lasting way to make a difference," said Avery.

At the end of the day, the most important thing you can do for a friend or loved one going through a traumatic event is to be there for them. That could be anything from bringing them a healthy portion of your famous jambalaya to offering some school supplies for their kids, or just sharing a cup of coffee and saying "I'm sorry you're going through this."

Here's a helpful list of regional charities still assisting with the Flood Relief efforts:

- **Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank** - BRFoodBank.org/2016Flood
- **Catholic Charities Diocese of Baton Rouge** - DonateNow.NetworkForGood.org/CCDBRDisasterResponse
- **Habitat for Humanity of Greater Baton Rouge** - HabitatBR.org
- **Baton Rouge Area Foundation** - BRAf.org/Louisiana-Flood-Relief

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JLNO Loves

Exercise Studios

By Emilia Anderson and Lea Witkowski-Purl

Everyone loves a good workout, right? Well ok, maybe we don't always LOVE it – but staying healthy is important at every stage of life, and in a city like New Orleans with so many great ways to indulge and have fun, it's even more important to find ways to balance that out with some healthy habits.

The good news is that gone are the days when working out meant a mind-numbing jog on the treadmill or fighting for your turn with the 15 lb. dumbbells at your big box gym. No matter what your workout style is, our city has something to offer, from cycling studios to Pilates to boxing classes. We're highlighting a couple of great local studios – Romney Studios and Hour Blast – that offer some of the hottest and most unique workout options to advance the wellbeing of women throughout the community.

Romney Studios is located on Magazine Street and owned by Erin

Romney. Romney offers classes in Pilates, RIDE cycling, Lagree Fitness Megaformer, barre and boxing. "We are five boutique studios under one roof," Erin said. "At Romney, we see fitness not just as one modality but many, all combined to challenge and change the body. To us, health is wealth."

Erin started the studio in 2005 because nothing similar existed in New Orleans. "I wanted to create a workout experience that could deliver what I get when I travel to NYC and LA, but not force me to have to travel all over the city paying high membership fees to get it," Erin said.

Romney Studios is different because it bucks the current fitness trend of boutique fitness studios that offer only one type of workout. Erin said traveling to multiple studios and having to maintain multiple expensive memberships in order to get the necessary cross training can be time consuming and costly.

"Our location has three different

levels," she said. "We have some of the strongest clients in town because they diversify their workouts through all of our programs...Your body needs to cross train in order to prevent plateau, to shock it into being a fat burning machine and to prevent repetitive use injuries."

Romney hosts a diverse crowd and Erin said that each hour is different. "Clientele range from high school kids to folks in their 80s. Each studio has its own vibe and energy that is really cool." She said that the studio is designed with wellness in mind including big windows for a light, bright interior with tall ceilings and light wood flooring, creating a clean large space to move in. The third location on Magazine Street was designed by Erin's father, who was recently named one of the top architects in the country.

Hour Blast has multiple locations throughout Metropolitan New Orleans. The newest location downtown is



Hour Blast Gym. Photo provided by: Katy Roubion

co-owned by Active members Katy Roubion and Meredith Charbonnet. Hour Blast offers fun, fast paced, high intensity interval training in one hour classes that combine cardio and strength/resistance training. Katy started doing Hour Blast because she loves to run, and Hour Blast was a natural fit. “I always had trouble motivating myself to lift weights and do abdominal work on my own,” she said. “When I started going to Hour Blast, I was forced to work outside of my comfort zone and do those exercises.”

Katy said she was surprised by how strength training improved her running and by how quickly the classes pass.

“I am never looking at the clock thinking, ‘When is it going to be over?’” she said.

Hour Blast caters to a variety of clients throughout the city, and offers lower intensity options in each class.

“We offer a walking, jogging and running option in each class to fit a

variety of fitness levels,” Katy said. “Our instructors will motivate you to work harder than you’ve ever worked before, encouraging you to get stronger, faster, leaner and overall more enthusiastic about exercising. It is truly a full body workout!”

Katy said Hour Blast is different from other workouts because it’s the most efficient. “In one hour, you will get cardio and strength training while increasing and decreasing your heart rate for maximum calorie burn,” she said. “We all have busy lives and Hour Blast will achieve all you need in one hour.”

The newest location is downtown on Baronne Street. It opened in May 2016 to a warm neighborhood welcome.

“The downtown community has welcomed us with open arms and we love being in this quickly growing area of town,” Katy said.

Erin and Katy find inspiration from the people around them. Erin said that other women inspire her to stay in shape

and live a healthful life.

“I love to see strong, in-shape woman over 30 who have had children!” Erin said. “When I see a woman who is in shape after having multiple children and hormone changes – and on top of that has very little free time – then I’ll have what she is having because I know that struggle! I’m blessed every day to be around such women. I even get to see these same women who start their journey at our studio and over the years have become the strongest women I know.”

Katy said her kids inspire her fitness goals and desire to have greater wellbeing in her life. “I want to stay fit and healthy so I can have the energy to play and run around with them.” She also said she loves having more energy after workouts so she can get more done and sleep better.

Erin and Katy offered sage advice when it comes to getting the most out of exercise.

“When it comes to working out, find what you absolutely love,” Erin said. “If you don’t love it, you won’t stick with it long.”

Katy’s exercise advice is to stay positive no matter what workout you choose.

“Eighty percent of exercise is mental, so you need to tell yourself you can do it. And you will,” she said.

The exercise gurus are looking forward to the holidays and parties while maintaining balance.

“My advice before heading out to a holiday party: try to eat at home before the event so you don’t get there hungry and gorge on possibly unhealthy food,” Erin said. “Then, find the veggie tray, fish options or salads for the healthiest choices.”

Katy reminded us to try to maintain a routine throughout the season.

“Even though the holiday season is busy, we all need to make it a priority to stick to our regular exercise routines as much as possible,” Katy said. “We all splurge during the holidays – just don’t let it spiral out of control. If you have a bad day or two, do your best to try to get back on track.”

Romney Studios is located at 5619 Magazine Street and on the web at RomneyStudios.com. Hour Blast has multiple locations in Metairie, Uptown, Lakeview and Downtown. You can find it on the web at HourBlast.com.

Where Are They Now?

Community Assistance Fund Grant Recipients

By Lea Witkowski-Purl

The Community Assistance Fund is a project of JLNO that provides direct funding to other non-profit organizations in the New Orleans community. “Prior to the Community Assistance Fund becoming a JLNO project, The Junior League didn’t have any way to help out organizations, children’s groups or groups who needed emergency funding that did not fit into our year long project development timeline,” said Erin Luetkemeier, 2006-07 CAF Chair and past JLNO President. “The amount given out is not large, compared to those grants given to projects that are paired with volunteer hours. It’s a way for us to help small organizations that need help quickly to continue a project or plan they already have planned to put into action.”

The CAF program awards grants to programs that have a dire need for funding and seek to advance the wellbeing of women. Through the CAF program, JLNO has distributed more than \$313,000 in grants since 2007. The grants are funded by a portion of every member’s dues in addition to philanthropic gifts from donors.

The CAF Committee is responsible for vetting applications and choosing grant recipients. “It’s great training for League members to participate in the CAF process. Committee members are tasked with reviewing all applications and learning about the work of each applicant. Each CAF committee member presents their finding to the full committee and the committee votes on the potential grantees. The JLNO Board then reviews the decisions and the monies are given yearly. This whole process gets our members into the community learning about other nonprofits and the current and ever changing needs the city faces,” Erin said.

The stories of CAF grants range from a children’s center that lacked air conditioning to a summer program that could not afford books for kids.

“It’s tangible things that organizations need to function,” Erin said.

We caught up with three previous CAF grant recipients – Savoir Faire at The Wildlife Reserve, the Mother’s Milk Bank at Ochsner Baptist and Grace House – and learned more about how the grants impacted their organizations and the women in our community that they serve.

Savoir Faire was a non-profit fashion incubator with a goal of helping emerging designers start their collections at The Wild Life Reserve, and JLNO supported its mission with a CAF grant in the fall of 2014.

“Your donation lit a fire on our stove and we have been incredibly busy managing all the burners,” said Tabitha Bethune, Creative Director for The Wild Life Reserve.

The CAF grant helped launch Onyii & Company. Onyii Brown, founder, was a stay at home mother who Savoir Faire

helped transform into an award winning designer featured in British Vogue and nominated as one of Martha Stewart’s top designers of 2015. She has presented her collection at New York Fashion Week.

The CAF grant also purchased tools for fashion entrepreneur Adrianna Moore to design and create her clothing and jewelry line. Her resulting collection, titled Batu, showed at New Orleans Fashion Week as well as Jazz Fest 2016. This CAF grant helped develop the potential of these two women and launch them into the realm of success.

In June 2016, Savoir Faire was dissolved as a non-profit organization, but The Wild Life Reserve continues to serve as a fashion incubator in New Orleans.

In the spring of 2016, the **Mother’s Milk Bank at Ochsner Baptist** received support from a CAF grant. The Milk Bank has formed a partnership with the Diaper Bank in an effort to provide even greater support to under resourced women raising children. The Milk Bank is the first of its kind in Louisiana and provides irreplaceable nourishment to babies that need it the most.

“Mother’s milk...is as life-saving as blood,” said Dr. Harley Ginsberg, NICU Medical Director at Ochsner Baptist Medical Center.

It’s especially important that premature and vulnerable babies receive nourishment from mother’s milk instead of formula.

“Right now, we’re functioning as a depot,” Dr. Ginsberg said.

This means that after an extensive screening process, certified donors can drop off their extra milk at Baptist where it is frozen and shipped to Austin, Texas, for processing. The CAF grant helped pay for the freezer and helps with ongoing shipping costs.

“The grant from the Junior League was huge,” Dr. Ginsberg said. “The check stayed up in our unit literally for three months!”

Once the Milk Bank is fully functional and can pasteurize milk, they can begin shipping it to other hospitals while providing the service to women in this area. The CAF grant for the Milk Bank provides essential family support to women and provides support to help Ochsner Baptist be a women’s health leader in the area.

Grace House is another CAF grant recipient which serves women in the Metropolitan New Orleans area. Grace House is a long term residential treatment center for women with substance abuse issues.

“Taking care of physical health problems early in sobriety can be incredibly triggering and stressful,” said Megan McLean, Clinical Director at Grace House. “The CAF grant allowed our women to receive wellness exams in a safe



Grace House/Bridge House Executive Director of Clinical Services, Michelle Gaiennie, and Clinical Program Director, Megan McLean standing in front of the Tree of Life located in the dining hall of Bridge House. *Photo by: Evie Hunnicutt*



Junior League member Jennifer Macias and baby Mary drop off breast milk for the Mothers' Milk Bank with Dorothy Sandville at Ochsner. *Photo by: Michelle Sens*



Onyii Brown, founder of Onyii & Co. *Photo provided by: The Wildlife Reserve*

and comfortable environment where they were treated for very difficult health concerns in a respectful way. Through generous donations and grants such as the CAF, we have been able to help women receive these much needed services as a stepping stone to getting their lives back on track."

Since receiving a CAF grant in spring of 2015, the Tulane Grace House Clinic was able to provide approximately 70 pap smears, 80 tests for sexually transmitted infections and numerous referrals for positive results. For roughly 70 percent of the women, this was their first Women's Wellness exam in more than years. Two women were identified and began treatment for invasive cervical cancer and countless others were referred out for treatment of pre-cancerous cells. All the women who entered the program were also able to receive general histories and physicals through the clinic.

Megan shared stories about individuals directly impacted by the funding provided by the CAF grant. One day she

stopped to ask a woman how she was.

"She said, 'No one has ever asked me what was wrong. No one has ever asked me what I wanted or how I felt,'" Megan said. Women treated at Grace House go through a rigorous treatment program designed to empower women. The CAF grant is helping support 70 women in two locations currently being treated with therapy and programming.

"These are powerful stories. I'm lucky enough to get to see it every day," Megan said. "But you all get to fund it."

Applications are due on January 20 for the 2017 grant cycle. If you're interested in supporting the CAF at JLNO, please contact CAF@jlno.org or 504-891-5845. For more information about the CAF program and to see a list of all the recipients, visit JLNO.org/Community/Community-Assistance-Fund-Grants.



An Easy How To for Meditation in Daily Life

By Adele Abboud

Do you practice daily meditation? Lifestyle experts from Oprah, life coach Gabrielle Bernstein and alternative medicine advocate Deepak Chopra tout the daily physical and mental benefits of mindfulness and meditation. To some readers these buzzwords appear trendy or au courant like the latest hair style, exercise trend or health food craze. But unlike some other short lived fads, these practices have existed for centuries throughout numerous cultures. Daily meditation practices allow participants to make strides in personal growth by bringing awareness to inner voices of doubt, stress and fear while making shifts that bring peace, gratitude and joy to the moments of daily life. JLNO Active Natalie Kaharick, a certified instructor for the Art of Living Foundation, said she relies on “a mix of yoga, breathing techniques and meditation to give me energy to handle life’s ups and downs.”

Meditation can simply mean taking a moment to sense the environment around you. For instance, spend a moment focusing on senses like sight, texture, taste, sound and smell. This simple but powerful action calms the body and brings awareness to the present moment. It’s incredible the different sounds and smells observed during this meditation by just taking a moment to be still. You can perform this style of meditation anywhere and at any time. Christine Clarity Imfeld of Lifestyle Coaching in San Francisco and Katie Chamberlain Kritikos, a blogger on mindbodygreen.com offer these tips to incorporating meditation into daily life.

- Select a convenient time, it can be a longer block or a small increment. Simple, two-minute meditations while waiting in the car during carpool, before you get out of bed or before you hop in the shower can provide benefits.

- Find a quiet spot and sit comfortably with correct posture.
- Take a few moments to focus and concentrate on breath-

ing. If your thoughts wander, simply return back to your breath.

- If meditation does not come easily, use guided meditations. Free resources for a variety of meditations can be found on youtube and downloaded from podcasts.

- Scan your body and pay attention to how it feels. Start with your head and work your way down. Try counting backward from 100.

- Create a personal manifesto or mantra such as, “I live in a loving and abundant world. I am grateful.” Repeat this internally and your mind will center.

Whether your motivation is to manage stress, increase happiness, personal growth or even to become more successful in your career, applying these simple but consistent practices to daily life may lead you to realize that anything is possible.

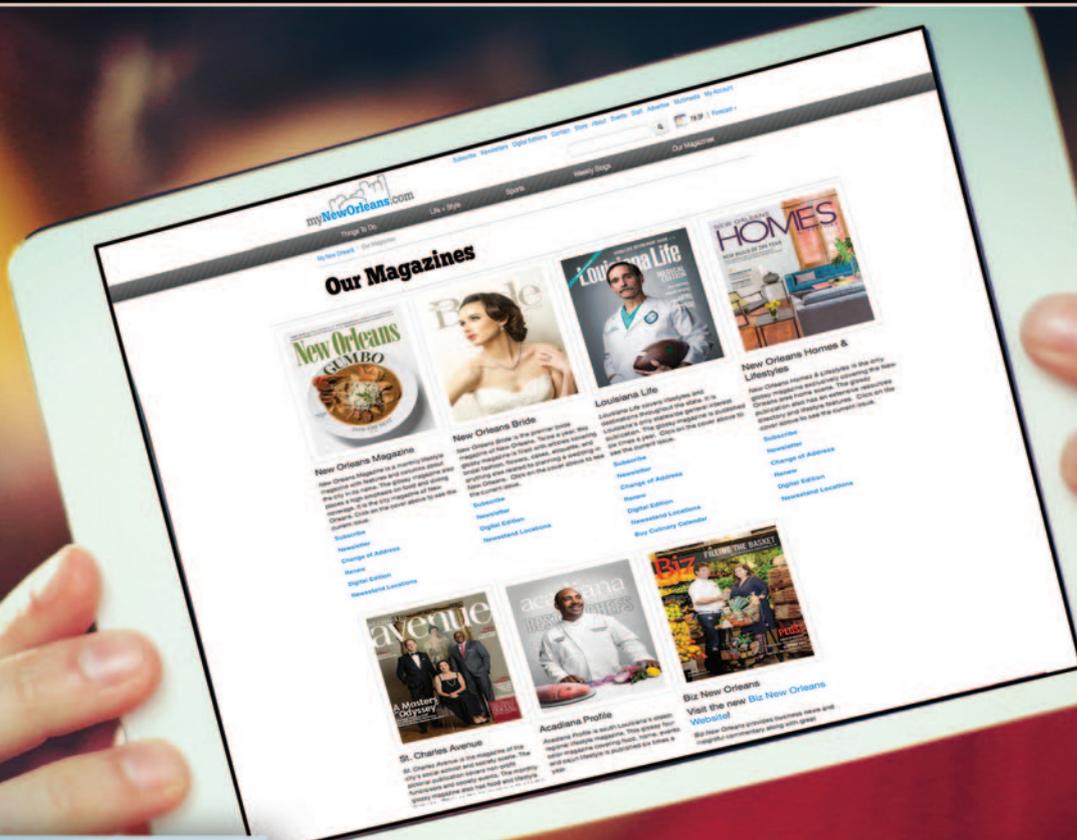
“I know that sounds a bit cliché, but it really works,” Natalie said. “I feel very lucky that I learned these practices when I was in college and that I’ve stuck with them for 13+ years.” She also suggested to “make time for yourself, even if it’s just a few minutes, to do something that you love that brings you joy and allows you to connect to your inner self.”

JLNO members can find more information about meditating and events with Natalie through MeetUp.com/Nola-Meditators.



Natalie Kaharick, a certified instructor for the Art of Living Foundation.
Photo provided by: Natalie Kaharick

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Joseph Williams and Chad Passatino delivering a generous donation on behalf of Vinson Guard Service, Inc. *Photo by: Carrie Moulder*

Diapers, Disaster and Dogma: JLNO Called to Action

By Jill Holland

As Meredith Beers, JLNO Diaper Bank Committee Chair, was flying home from Houston over South Louisiana on Friday, August 12, she could see the water in places where homes and roads should be and realized, “This is far worse than we thought.”

At the same time, JLNO President Maria Pardo Huete was in contact with the Junior League presidents of Baton Rouge and Lafayette to offer support and consulting with the JLNO Board of Directors on ways to help if the situation required it. A letter she drafted went out on Sunday, August 14 to all JLNO members calling for action. Susan Langenhennig of the Times Picayune posted it that evening on nola.com.

That Monday, the donate button on the League’s website went live and members began donating to the flood relief project and sharing the link on social media.

And on Thursday, August 18 – just four days after the initial letter to the League was sent – 40,000 diapers and baby products along with \$2,000 in gift cards were headed to Junior League of Baton Rouge to assist those in need on

a truck donated from All My Sons Moving. Local businesses reached out to assist the League in delivering donations to the flood zones in recovery. Bart’s Office Furniture & Repair donated a truck and labor to deliver 140,000 diapers to the Church of St. Amant. Ralph’s on the Park delivered 20,000 JLNO diapers in their truck of relief supplies when they went to cook for the flood victims. Countless businesses and organizations in the Crescent City reached out to support JLNO’s objective: to help our neighbors.

Even the United States Postal Service pitched in to help Louisianans in need. Just a few days after JLNO’s relief work began, six large USPS trucks pulled up outside of Headquarters to drop off gifts from across the country. Forty states have contributed \$65,000 that directly assisted flood victims. More than 334,000 diapers have been collected and distributed – a number that rivals the League’s annual Diaper Bank goal. The League has also received and distributed 176,000 diaper wipes, 53,000 feminine products, 16,000 ounces of infant formula, \$14,000 in gift cards and tens of thousands of other toiletry items.



Rain or shine, JLNO members working hard to load donations for transport. *Photo by: Carrie Moulder*



President-Elect Kristen Koppel, Diaper Bank Chair Meredith Beers and President Maria Pardo Huete taking a road trip to deliver much needed supplies. *Photo by: Carrie Moulder*

While the Diaper Bank resources have been the focus of JLNO's giving, the Junior League is offering its assistance for other items as well. In New Iberia, the Disch-DeClouet Social Service Center needed items that the JLNO Diaper Bank would normally supply but also socks, undergarments, clothing, bedding, 1,000 one-pound bags of dried beans, 1,000 jars of peanut butter and 1,000 cans of tuna for the area's flood victims.

Carol Gaignard, the secretary of the Disch-DeClouet, a United Way organization, was amazed when a U-Haul crewed by Maria Pardo Huete, Meredith Beers and President-Elect Kristen Koppel pulled up to say JLNO

was there to deliver their wish list and then began unloading. "[They] worked like Trojans," said Carol, who was even more astonished to find out that the driver of the big truck was our League President.

Our leaders are setting the high standard for what being a member of JLNO means today. Maria not only sounded the trumpet but has determinedly labored alongside provisionals, actives and sustainers in the relief. Meredith, who saw the devastation from the air, has worked countless hours in her role as chair of the Diaper Bank Committee to ensure the donations coming in are distributed efficiently. Kristen manned Headquarters every day for two weeks receiving shipments. Members past and present are taking their cues from these leaders and committing their gifts and services to the Junior League's operation.

When asked about the success of this campaign, Maria said three things came to mind:

"Being specific about the needs of the mission is important. We focused on diapers, wipes, formula and hygiene items. This gave people something specific with which to help. It also opened her eyes to the need for diapers – an item that is a luxury for those without access to them because of cost or, in this case, disaster/emergency.

"Our small Board of 13 leaders is nimble and able to act quickly. This was very instrumental in mobilizing JLNO's resources. A larger board with a division of governance and management would not be able to spring to action in the same way.

"Seeing JLNO do exactly what it is purposed to do is amazing – voluntarism at its purest form. The Junior League is at the forefront of helping people in need."

The flooding of water was worse than we could have conceived. But the flood of donations and voluntarism is greater than we could have hoped. It has shown us what we can accomplish when we truly come together in our state and across our nation, League to League, person to person. We are not only "Women Building a Greater New Orleans," but women who are embodying AJLI's vision as well: "Catalysts for Lasting Community Change."

"There are times I have been proud of the Junior League, but I have never been so proud as I am now to be a New Orleanian and a League member," Kristen professed.



The first year Beverly Lamb hosted her party in 1984. **Top row (L to R):** Allison Lamb Steinfeld, Whitney Lamb Brooks, Barkley Abbott, Jennifer King, Lisa Richardson **Bottom row (L to R):** Joscelin Bolton, Megan Thompson, Lindsay Rolston. *Photo provided by: Whitney Brooks*

Cultural Cheer

Celebrating Our Similarities and Differences

By Jill Holland

Among our Junior League members in New Orleans, family, friends and food are at the core of who we are and how we celebrate regardless of the season. Along with our shared festive culture, each home has traditions that are heartwarmingly unique. These similarities and differences are never more evident than during the holidays when we open our doors, our hearts and our homes to share traditions, cultures and customs with family members and friends.

In 1984, JLNO Sustainer Beverly Lamb received a gingerbread house recipe from a fellow JLNO member and brought their tradition into her own home. “Susan McIntyre started gingerbread house parties years ago,” said Allison Steinfeld, Beverly’s daughter. “She shared the recipe with my mom, but she continued for years to have a weekend of open house times for friends to come by and decorate houses.” Taking her friend’s recipe and tradition, Beverly hosted her first Gingerbread House Party for her daughters, Allison and Whitney, and a group of Allison’s classmates – eight girls in all.

The children adorned their confectionary dwellings with gumdrops, M&Ms, licorice, candy canes and small plastic

trees dripped with frosting. After the trimming of the houses, the girls dined on festive red and green McKenzie bread PB&J sandwiches, nibbled on the leftover candy and listened to Beverly read her holiday adaptation of the book *Corduroy*. This was followed by a game of Hot Candy Cane (a holiday “hot potato”) and surprisingly free reign to graffiti the walls that had been hung with examination paper Beverly’s husband had procured from his work. The party was a great success. Thus began the Lamb family’s Gingerbread House Party.

Three decades after the first gingerbread party at the Lamb home, Allison and her sister Whitney share this holiday tradition with their children at their Jambalaya and Gingerbread Party each year the weekend before Christmas. The party, which Allison began hosting in 2010, has grown and changed considerably over the past thirty years, but the festiveness of the occasion, the special memories created and the gingerbread recipe remain the same.

Like the Lambs, Active Erica Washington and her family also incorporate food and community into their holiday season. On Christmas Eve morning, Erica, her father Leo, her mother



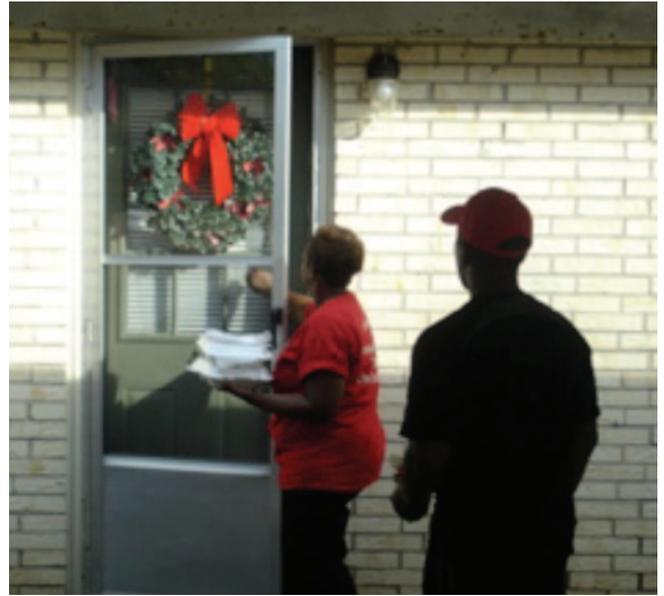
A parishioner of Wesley United Methodist Church prepares a turkey to deliver to a home-bound family. *Photo provided by: Erica Washington*

Donna and her aunt Rita meet at Wesley United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge and prepare dinners for home bound parishioners. It is an all-day undertaking. Turkeys, vegetables, dressings and desserts are cooked, baked and plated with extra for the days following the holiday. The first year, they prepared meals for four families. Seven years later, they have doubled their good works, serving eight homes.

Once the kitchen camaraderie is completed and the catering loaded into the church's van, meals are hand delivered by the Washingtons and their friends. This is as much a part of their tradition as the making of the food itself. Erica's father has impressed upon her the importance of serving those in need, not just with the gift of food but also with time and attention. Meals are bequeathed with a hand shake or a hug and a short visit to bestow holiday love and cheer. In true Louisiana fashion, Erica and her family spread the bounty of the season by filling others with joy.

Sharing the merriment of a holiday table isn't just for native Louisianans, though. Sustainer Merisa Pasternak's family is from the Philippines, and hosted Filipino feasts during each of her childhood holidays. As part of their traditions, they took (and still take) as much pride in the preparation of the food as the sharing of it. Pancit, lumpia, whole fish, lechon and flan are served in abundance and guests are expected to share in the abundance. Partaking in the dining is viewed as an acceptance of the host's affection and hospitality for their guests. Merisa is looking forward to hosting this banquet style Filipino tradition during Christmas this year.

Like many families, the Pasternaks travel every other year for the holidays to see family in other parts of the country. Her husband Ryan's relatives live in Richmond, Virginia, the visiting place of the Legendary Santa since 1936. Legend has it that Santa chose the Miller and Rhoads Department Store in Downtown Richmond as his seasonal headquarters. Ryan grew up telling his Christmas wishes to the real Santa at Miller and Rhoads Department Store, and his parents did as well! As part of their visit to his family in Richmond, Ryan and Merisa take their son Hayden to see St. Nick, sharing this tradition with a third generation of Pasternaks.



Knock, knock! Erica Washington's parents, Donna and Leo, arrive to bring holiday cheer and a meal to a home-bound family. *Photo provided by: Erica Washington*



In Virginia, Merisa, Ryan and their son Hayden pose with The Legendary Santa. Ryan and his mother (Hayden's grandmother) are convinced this is the same Santa they each visited as children! *Photo provided by: Merisa Pasternak*



Whether feasting in New Orleans or whispering wishes to Santa in Richmond, Merisa and Ryan have one constant tradition – the hanging of the greens at their home in Bayou St. John. Five years ago, they began this tradition when Merisa chaired the Morris Jeff Community School’s holiday greens fundraiser and realized a wreath was just what their front bay window was missing. The wreath (that Ryan decorates) has become an expected sight on their street and is hung the first week in December. On Twelfth Night, the Christmas decorations adorning it are removed, and Ryan bedecks it with Mardi Gras trimmings. It hangs through Fat Tuesday.

About the time the Pasternak’s wreath is getting ready to retire, Active Lisa Yip’s family is preparing for the Chinese New Year. While Lisa’s family celebrates Thanksgiving and Christmas, this Chinese holiday, also known as Spring Festival, is their most important family tradition. Each aspect of the Chinese New Year, which lasts fifteen days and, like Mardi Gras, is determined by the lunar calendar, is rooted in tradition and symbolism. In preparation for the holiday, homes are cleaned to signify the removing of the old and welcoming of the new. Red ornaments and trimmings are hung to symbolize good fortune, joy, truth and sincerity. Where festivals are held, there are Dragon dances and Lion dances with varied meanings of luck and prosperity. Fireworks, once upon a time thought to drive away evil spirits, are now displayed to represent the jubilation of the season.

As the final days of the celebration approach, the Yip Family travels from their different parts of the country to come together and attend temple as a family, last year meeting at the temple in Houston, Texas. At temple, there is a midnight service with chanting of prayers and ringing of bells by the presiding monks. The service is followed by a dinner of traditional Chinese food, each dish with its own meaning: dumplings for wealth, noodles for longevity, oranges for good luck and fortune and rice cakes for prosperity. Red envelopes

TOP: Lisa Yip (top center) poses for a family photo with her parents, brothers, sisters-in-law, niece and nephew.

BOTTOM: The Yip family’s red envelopes are prepared and await the Chinese New Year fete along with birthday cupcakes for Lisa’s nephew – a joint celebration. The envelopes contain money and are given with well wishes of good fortune and prosperity.

Photos provided by: Lisa Yip



containing money are exchanged, mostly by adults to children, to represent the exchanging of good luck – whether containing one penny or larger amounts, the importance is in the offering of luck to those they care about.

“It is a wonderful time surrounded by love and laughter with family and friends,” Lisa shared.

Creating confections. Cooking for the community. Passing along family recipes and sharing outings. Ringing in a New Year. With each shared tradition, we open our lives up to others and connect by celebrating our similarities and our differences.

It truly is wonderful.

Back to Basics:

Dieting Dilemmas

By Jill Holland



Ingrid Rinck, a JLNO Provisional member, is the owner and CEO of Sensible Portions Meals. *Photo provided by: Ingrid Rinck*

Paleo. Whole 30. Clean Eating. These are the trending “diets” of the day. The common core of all three is organic, unprocessed meats and produce. They also take grains, dairy, sugars, artificial sweeteners and alcohol off the menu. Supporters assert the remarkable health benefits and weight loss outcomes.

Ingrid Rinck, owner and CEO of Sensible Portions Meals, one of the largest meal prep companies in the country, and a Provisional JLNO member, is a guide through this nutritional minefield for people nationwide.

Ingrid endorses the return to basics that these trending food plans call for. She eats as clean as possible with her own family. Clean eating is often defined as eating foods that are as close to their natural state as possible, whole or minimally processed. “I’m teaching them habits from the beginning. Good habits,” explained Ingrid.

The good habits that she is teaching her three children and providing for her clients are not ones that Generation Y grew up with. Ingrid acknowledged that for her age group, Pop Tarts were breakfast staples, along with pizza and sodas at school for lunch, hormone treated meats and canned veggies for dinner, with chips or candy bars for snacks in between. Generation Y was raised with sugar as an additive in almost every dish. Eliminating these things cold turkey is shocking for individuals who have grown up with processed foods as part of their day to day.

Step one, she said for people starting any dietetic regimen, is calorie restriction and portion control. Sensible Portions Meals does this. Half of the meals are healthy foods (like chicken, rice or broccoli) and

the other half are comfort foods (like waffles and pasta). She conceded that one of the reasons Weight Watchers has worked for so many people is the same reason the meals her company provides also work: eating healthy is possible if you allow portions of comfort foods along with the “clean eats.”

Over time, as results from the portion control become apparent, Ingrid said people generally seek to do more. At this point, a return-to-basics diet is not as much of a blow to the system, making simple, clean options more feasible. The toxins have been cleaned out of their bodies, and doing the Paleo/Whole 30/Clean Eating programs are manageable. And by gradually working up to one of these plans, the success rate is higher for maintaining it as a lifestyle.

In the end, Ingrid stressed that evaluating what will work for you is the most important detail of selecting a dietary strategy. “If it’s going to work for you, and you can do it, then stick to it.”

PALEO DIET

A diet based on the types of foods presumed to have been eaten by early humans, consisting chiefly of meat, fish, vegetables and fruit, and excluding dairy or grain products and processed food.

WHOLE 30

A trademarked diet brand that encourages you to cut out certain food groups (sugar, grains, dairy and legumes) for 30 days for a “nutritional reset.”

CLEAN EATING

A diet based on eating whole or real foods that are minimally processed and as close to their natural form as possible.

Hosting a Successful, Stress-free Holiday Party

By Emma Pegues

Everyone loves a holiday party. The merriment and joy, the love and laughter, coordinating with the caterer and making sure your gluten free appetizer is also vegan...wait. We all know that hosting a holiday party can be an overwhelming experience, but who's to say you can't enjoy it? Here are some tips from JLNO members on how to spread cheer without losing your ho-ho-holiday mind.

#1 Be (Over) Prepared

It's important to do as much as possible in the days leading up to your event and keep things simple. I like to simplify the bar by serving beer, wine (always with a sparkling option!) and a special cocktail. My family's favorite holiday drink is Brandy Milk Punch. You can make it in bigger batches a day or two ahead of time and it is perfectly festive and delicious! Pick out, and lay out, serving pieces in advance of your party and put slips of paper with what will go in each dish. That way, if someone is there to help you, they know what belongs where. Don't try to be everything when you're entertaining! It is important to know what you do well and do that, outsource the rest. And remember, a little festive hair flair is ALWAYS a good idea. – Rachel Stickney, JLNO Active



of everyone's specialty. You can also invite them to share their recipes! – Alicia McCraw, JLNO Active

#2 Let's Get Digital

If you are hosting a large holiday meal and people are offering to bring items, create an online menu template. You can outline the major components you will be serving, for example, the proteins, vegetables, dessert and wine. Then, invite your guests to sign up to bring their favorite dishes to fill the table with an amazing array



blender. I even let him cut vegetables if I can be nearby to oversee. – Amber Beezley, JLNO Sustainer

#3 The Kids Are Alright

Get the kids to help with the prep work so they feel like they are part of the event. My kids love to help decorate the house and create pre-cut assembly only decorations. I can also get my oldest (7 years) to set the table and mix ingredients in the

#4 - Curate Your Crowd

The best parties introduce new friends! A holiday party offers you the opportunity to invite people that you'd like to get to know better. It also gives you a chance to connect friends from one circle to another. Be thoughtful about your guest list, mixing up interests and perspectives while creating a comfortable, fun, and interesting environment for all! – Mollye Demosthenidy, JLNO Active



style you love, do because your friends are there to see you. – Bev Church, JLNO Sustainer

#5 Have Fun With It

Entertaining is supposed to be fun! You have got to loosen up about all these things that you worry about. Entertaining is a gift you give to your friends and you want to make it the best gift ever. They're there to see you! You don't have to be a flower designer; you just have to have a garden you can pick from. I love seated dinners, but if you love to cater or have a buffet - whatever

Signature Holiday Cocktail and Dessert

Compiled by Emilia Anderson



Photo provided by: The Little Epicurean

HOLIDAY MILK PUNCH

- 2 cups milk
- 2 cups half-and-half
- 1 cup brandy or bourbon
- ½ cup sifted powdered sugar
- 1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- Crushed ice
- Freshly grated nutmeg (make sure to grate it fresh!)
- Cinnamon sticks for a decorative touch!

Whisk together milk, half-and-half, brandy, powdered sugar and vanilla in a pitcher.

Serve over crushed ice.

Top each serving with freshly grated nutmeg.

KONA INN BANANA BREAD

From the *Junior League Palo Alto Cookbook*

The best banana bread that we've ever tasted, it stays moist indefinitely... although it is always gone before we can prove that fact!

- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 1 cup softened butter
- 6 ripe bananas, mashed (approximately 3 cups)
- 4 eggs, well-beaten
- 2 ½ cups cake flour*
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt

Add chocolate chips, shredded coconut, walnuts or any other mix-ins you'd like! (I like to make one loaf plain and then jazz up the second!)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

With electric beater, cream together sugar and butter until light and fluffy. Add bananas and eggs, beating until well-mixed.

Sift together dry ingredients three times. Blend with banana mixture but do not overmix.

Pour into 2 lightly-greased loaf pans. Bake for 45 minutes to one hour, until firm in the centers and the edges begin to separate from the pans.

Cool on a rack for 10 minutes before removing from pans.

These freeze beautifully!

*If you don't have cake flour on hand, you can make your own with all-purpose flour and cornstarch – Google for the exact ratios!

Yield: Two loaves

Preparation: 20 minutes

Baking: 45-60 minutes

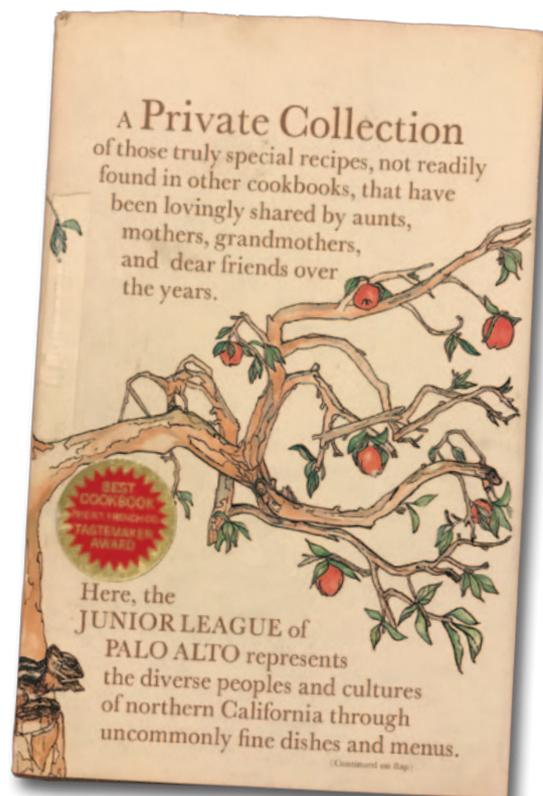


Photo by Emilia Anderson

Advancing the Wellbeing of Women:

A Community Approach

By Michelle Craig and Emma Pegues

As members of the Junior League of New Orleans, we are no strangers to our focus area of Advancing the Wellbeing of Women. While JLNO works specifically to improve economic opportunities, provide family support and promote women's health resources, we are in good company when it comes to local women's organizations working to tackle those and other areas of need within our community. Speaking with several New Orleans organizations, a common thread emerged — women committed to bettering themselves, their families and their communities.



Improving Communities through Effective Action

The League of Women Voters (LWV), a national nonpartisan 501(c)(4) member organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. After the national league was founded in 1920 during the National American Woman Suffrage Association's convention, the New Orleans chapter was established in October 1942 specifically to mobilize women for non-partisan, constructive reform.

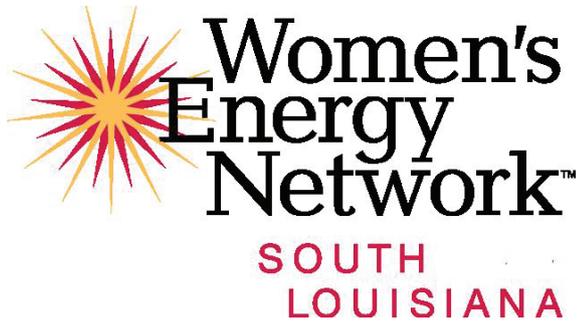
From their office on Prytanía Street, LWV New Orleans focuses on two distinct political roles: providing voter services and citizen education and promoting action and advocacy. Rosalind Blanco Cook, who has served as president of the local league for the past two years, believes her involvement in LWV New Orleans has helped her understanding of sociopolitical issues within the city and describes it as a "great opportunity to learn leadership skills." Rosalind, who also sits on the Women's Issues committee for LWV Louisiana and teaches political science classes at Tulane University, was quick to point out that often success for women's organizations means collaboration. Hosting judicial forums with the National Council of Jewish Women and the National Coalition of 100 Black Women is part of what Rosalind says has given her "a real appreciation of politics and policy and a desire to help in the community."



Developing the Potential of Women

Louisiana ranks 48th in average earnings for women working full-time in the United States and our wage gap, at 35 percent, is the worst in the nation, according to a new organization called Nola4Women. New Orleans women are particularly susceptible to this gap, earning only 71 percent of their male counterparts' salaries. Frustrated? So were the founders of Nola4Women, a local nonprofit organization created in 2015 to take action through innovative programs celebrating women and girls while providing a forum to address challenges and promote equal opportunities. "Every one of us has an idea of what success looks like," explained Nola4Women co-founder and JLNO Sustainer Kathy Epstein Seligman. "But if you don't have that model, it can be hard to get there."

Through their initiatives and partners, Nola4Women encourages young students to learn about local women heroes, shines a spotlight on the prominent role women have played in rebuilding New Orleans and uses New Orleans as a catalyst for larger discussions on international women's issues. "If we, as women, don't help each other, it's going to be a lot harder to get everywhere we are trying to go," said Kathy. Former JLNO President Dr. Katherine Raymond echoed those sentiments, "The most important thing we can do as women is to encourage and support other women. New Orleans is an ideal place to both observe challenges and propose solutions." Putting their mission into action, Nola4Women has been instrumental in the development of the inaugural Mirror on the World Global Summit on Women and Girls which will be hosted during the City of New Orleans' Tricentennial Celebration in March 2018. By collaborating with community members and other grassroots organizations, Nola4Women is able to address critical issues affecting today's women and address them in a solution-focused manner to help level the playing field.



Improving Economic Opportunities for Women

Another organization committed to ensuring that women are supported and able to thrive professionally is the Women's Energy Network (WEN). While WEN is an international organization, the South Louisiana chapter was founded in 2009 and provides its local members with career mentorships, access to energy specific job boards and networking events, just to name a few perks. WEN's three part mission to foster the careers of women who work in the energy sector, provide them with networking opportunities and to develop women leaders in the energy arena is put into action through a mix of social and education programs designed to bolster women in their individual careers and empower women in the energy field as a whole.

Dana Douglas, the chapter's founding President, speaks to the progress women can make when they come together to develop each other's professional potential. "It has been exciting to witness the growth of the organization throughout South Louisiana for many reasons, not the least of which is that the women who work in what is thought to be a very male dominant industry are becoming more visible," she said. "That can only mean great things for the younger people across our state who dream of working in these fields." Involvement in these organizations not only bolsters professional connections, but personal ones as well. JLNO Active and past WEN South Louisiana president Nene Glenn Gianfala explained, "Like JLNO, WEN is another outlet to socialize with great women while serving your local community. Whether it's a JLNO thrift store shift or helping out at STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) day at Zephyr stadium with WEN, volunteering together forges friendships that continue long after the project is complete."

Promoting Resources for Women's Health

In a city where accessible, affordable health care can be a challenge, one local-turned-national organization is working hard to improve the physical, mental and spiritual health of women and their families. The Institute of Women & Ethnic Studies (IWES) was founded in New Orleans in 1993 with the aim of enhancing quality of life for socioeconomically disadvantaged women through community-driven research, advocacy, and partnerships.

IWES takes a "truly unique approach to empowering disadvantaged communities," said board member Kandice Doley. Through the creation of culturally proficient programs, IWES is able to both address and advocate for the capacity of women of color and their communities to create sustainable change in several areas including resilience, emotional and physical well-being, youth development and sexual health. Working with partners like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the New Orleans Health Department, IWES uses the Social Ecological Model to heal communities from the inside out and "affect real, sustainable change" for women who need it most.

These are just a few of New Orleans' many non-profit organizations that, through their unique work in our communities, share JLNO's focus on Advancing the Wellbeing of Women. As members of the Junior League, it is empowering to see how our goals align with these neighboring organizations, our individual contributions acting as the common thread to educate, heal and support each other in the face of adversity. Sustainer Kathy Epstein Seligman affirmed these worthwhile efforts, "Some days are difficult and some days are amazing, but all women should help other women. It's our job."



LEFT: Susana Ruddock, Rachel Moring, and Shelley Winstead enjoy cocktails on the terrace of The Cannery.



RIGHT: Girls Night Out Vice-Chair Skye Fantaci holds a bucket of prizes for guests playing one of the many carnival games at Girls Night Out.

Photos by: Jessica Whitworth

JLNO's New Fundraiser

A Fantastic Reason for a "Girls Night Out"

By Elizabeth Walcavich

All you ladies leave your man at home, cuz it's seven o'clock and the Cannery is jumpin' jumpin'! It may have been a school night, and it may have been a local event venue, but more than 300 women of New Orleans were out and having as much fun as a weekend in Vegas. On December 1, ladies donned their hottest outfits, left their men at home and headed to Mid-City for a night of food, fun and prizes at the first Girls Night Out!

Upon checking-in, guests were greeted with a DJ and given carnival game tickets, swag bags and numbered tickets for the six fabulous door prizes. Every 15 minutes throughout the night, numbers were chosen and winners received a vast array of luxury prizes. Carnival games replaced the bingo event planned due to overwhelming support of local vendor donations that allowed JLNO to open the event to more winners. Close to \$20,000 in prizes were donated and swag bags were valued at \$170 each.

"Initial feedback has been that attendees had a great time at the event. From the food to the libations and the prizes, there was something for everyone," said Maria Pardo Huete, JLNO President. "Credit for a fantastic event really belongs to the chairs, their committee and Ways and Means Council Director Christine Vinson. I can't wait to see how this inaugural event develops over the next few years."

The Skin, Spa and Sparkle drawing included a skin care regimen from Audubon Dermatology, a massage and facial from The Spa at The Windsor Court and jewelry from Kendra Scott. The Sports drawing winner received four tickets to a Saints game, four tickets to a Pelicans game, an autographed basketball and a private party at F&M Patio Bar. The Staycation drawing included a two-night stay at the Ritz-Carlton, a \$100 gift card to Brennan's and two theater tickets to see Jersey Boys. Other drawings included Jazz Fest tickets, two rides in the Krewe of Orpheus with two \$500 gift cards from Plush Appeal and a black South Sea Tahitian Pearl necklace from Lee Michaels.

In addition to luxury prizes, guests used their tickets to participate in carnival games where additional prizes could be won.

Games and prizes were not the only entertainment the night had to offer. Throughout the night, the hosts challenged the crowd with JLNO trivia for additional prizes. Additionally, the venue's perimeter was surrounded by food from several local restaurants: freshly grilled oysters from Superior Seafood, pizza from Theo's Pizza and seven-layer dip from Taceaux Loceaux, just to name a few. There was also an open bar, serving everything from wine to mixed drinks and a signature cocktail.

"I'm having a really fun night!" relayed Lindsey Devereux. As a non-member, she explained she had often seen JLNO's presence throughout the community, but enjoyed getting to talk to members, and non-members alike, on a social level.

The inaugural Girls Night Out event was such a success, the future is bound to hold many more exciting and fun events to come! Proceeds from the event support JLNO's community projects including Lemonade Day University, Kids in the Kitchen and the Diaper Bank.

A special thanks to the sponsors and patrons of Girls Night Out, without which the night could not have been possible:

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Lulu Freiberg, Finance Director of Louisiana Center for Children's Rights, Harpreet Samra, Social Worker for Louisiana Center for Children's Rights and Timolynn Sams Sumter, Chief Innovative Officer for One Degree Impact, answers questions from league members during the Dialogue on Diversity.
Photo by: Michelle Sens

JLNO Embraces Diversity

By Lacy Strohschein

New Orleans is no stranger to the divisions between class, race and education levels that challenge our prosperity. True to our long history of civic engagement and community activism, the Junior League of New Orleans is addressing these issues head-on through the establishment of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

The Committee's goals are to "give members an opportunity to come together to discuss recent events and how they impact us as women and mothers. Sometimes just having an open conversation can help you process your own emotions," said Membership Council Director Alice Glenn.

Tasked with addressing diversity and disparity in a city historically bifurcated by both, this Committee is creating platforms to discuss these sensitive topics for JLNO members and community leaders. The first of such engagements was "Dialogue on Diversity," held August 16 at JLNO Headquarters. Inclusion Chair Cree Jones said, "The [Diversity and] Inclusion committee wanted to host the event for members to have an open and safe dialogue on the racial tension due to recent events in Baton Rouge and Dallas. It was meant for the members to hear different perspectives as they relate to each other."

The discussion was opened by a thoughtful warm-up exercise by trained moderator Cedric Scott (husband of JLNO Treasurer April Scott), which allowed the group of about 30 women to consider the frequency and limitations

of first impressions and how those impressions shape our engagement with others across our community.

"I would have to say I had a wonderful time being a part of such a needed conversation in today's culture climate," Cedric said. "To witness this level of engagement from the JLNO is what

will keep us moving forward and socially connected. They definitely moved the needle!"

This introspective exercise focused on the analogy of an iceberg – the idea that the surface only shows the tip of who a person really is – and opened the door to a fuller conversation with the evening's panelists: Timolynn Sams Sumter of One Degree Impact, Harpreet Samra of the Louisiana Center for Children's Rights and Sustainer Lulu Freiberg also of LCCR.

Guided by the firsthand experiences of daily inequity and injustice that these women experience, the discussion centered largely on how to address the most sensitive issues – including racism, policy, community violence, politics and terrorism – with children. Timolynn said, "There has to be intentionality in how and when you talk to your child. You have to meet them head on." Through the panelists' extensive professional and personal experiences as advocates and mothers, tough questions were met with realistic answers.

Harpreet cautioned parents, "Tread carefully with the conversation, but answer their questions."

In addition to the difficult decisions and discussions parents must confront, we face numerous barriers as a community and a plaguing feeling that we can and should do more. To that end, Timolynn pushed the participants to consistently think outside of the systems we operate in. If you see an issue you want to address or a conversation that needs to be had, Harpreet advised, "don't be afraid and don't hold back."

For JLNO's part, the conversation around diversity has just begun. Diversity and Inclusion Committee member Alice Jones said, "I'm very proud of JLNO's growing diversity in membership and want to do everything we can to ensure that we are not only meeting our members' needs, but offering opportunities to grow and improve our own personal well-being. Hopefully this event was a small first step."

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee is planning another panel discussion this spring and is looking to partner with other women's organizations in 2017 for additional programs and activities.



Adil and Sirena Nmili are excited for the race to begin.
Photo by: Stephanie Campani



Clint Walpole is happy to be approaching the finish line.
Photo by: Stephanie Campani

Spirit of Community

Freret 5K Fosters Neighborhood Joy

By Elizabeth Walcavich

Starting and ending at Bloomin' Deals, the Freret 5K is an annual fundraising event for the Junior League of New Orleans. Bloomin' Deals and the Bridal Boutique are situated in the middle of Freret Street, and hosting the 3.1-mile race allows the Junior League to focus on this neighborhood and help it continue to grow.

As runners lined up at the starting line, a wide array of athletes began to appear. Young runners and seasoned runners lined up. Runners in athletic gear and costumes emerged. Masked runners, tutu-clad runners and even riders of strollers began to congregate. The DJ began playing Pharrell's "Happy" and the runners were off. This year's winner was Will Wearing with a time of 16:53 to cross the finish line. The first female to cross the finish line was Laura Carleton with a time of 18:51. While the Freret 5K does award annual winners, the spirit of community and enjoyment surpass competitiveness. As the morning continued, the Tulane brass band played songs as sleeping babies in strollers, superheroes, Usain Bolt posers and other athletes crossed the finish line.

Two youth groups made a large showing at the event, Girls on the Run and Youth Run Nola. "Our goal is to empower, educate and inspire girls around New Orleans," said Georgina Dench, Program Director for Girls on the Run New Orleans. The popular after school program for girls in third through eighth grade, "inspires girls to be

joyful, healthy and confident using a fun, experience-based curriculum which creatively integrates running." Girls on the Run brought participants and their Happy Hair Station, which Georgina explained "helped put the girls in a joyful spirit for the race" by putting bright colors and glitter in their hair. Georgina said that Girls on the Run, who also partners with JLNO for Kids in the Kitchen, decided to participate in the Freret 5K because the JLNO's mission aligned with their own.

Another youth group with a large showing was Youth Run Nola. Tierney Jackson, a local Youth Run Nola participant said that Youth Run Nola is "kids of all different ages coming together" and felt the Freret 5K brought all their practice and hard work to an exciting culmination. "Exercise turned into fun for everyone," Tierney said. "Everyone became hyped up at the race. We got to meet new people, which allowed us to live out our values of community and joy."

The race concluded with a block-party filled with refreshments ranging from orange slices and pizza to beer and mimosas. The Freret 5K could not happen without the help of our generous sponsors. A big thank you goes out to the Grand Champion Sponsor Ochsner Baptist and the Gold Sponsor The New Orleans Advocate. Another big thank you goes out to all the volunteers who took time out of their busy days to make this event possible. Proceeds of the Freret 5K benefit JLNO's mission and community projects.



Meredith Beers. Photo provided by: Meredith Beers



Meredith works during a planning drill at the Smithsonian's National Zoo in Washington, D.C. in the summer of 2016. Photo provided by: Meredith Beers

A Profile in Planning

Meredith Beers

By Elizabeth Walcavich

Meredith Beers was a junior at Tulane University when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans. An English major, she was leaning toward law school when everything changed. Tulane temporarily moved its administrative offices to Houston, and Meredith spent the fall of 2005 doing what she terms her “domestic semester abroad.” Because her parents lived near Houston, she volunteered with Tulane instead of attending classes at another university. It was there that she first learned about disaster management and response, and that is when her academic focus shifted.

She graduated from Newcomb College in 2007 and earned her master’s in Public Health in 2011 from Tulane’s School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. During the summer between finishing her master’s and beginning work on her PhD (which was conferred by the School of Public Health in May 2016), Meredith worked at the Smithsonian’s National Zoo in Washington, D.C. While interning, she discovered “how much I enjoy planning drills and exercises, working on emergency plans and being involved on the planning and mitigation side of emergency preparedness and disaster management.” Meredith worked on her first emergency plan there, and also wrote, directed and evaluated a large-scale drill.

In December of 2012, she started Meredith Beers Consulting, LLC, with the motto “planning – preparing – preserving.” MBC, LLC is a disaster management and work health and

safety company that “provide[s] consulting services to help organizations plan emergency drills and exercises, review drills and exercises and develop after-action plans, and work with organizations on their emergency preparedness plans.” Meredith is adding a focus on environmental health and safety and industrial hygiene to her practice, both of which are components of disaster management.

During the recent Louisiana flooding, Meredith volunteered her unique skills through the Junior League. “Maria and the Board put out a call to action and the response was incredible!” Meredith said. She helped inventory all donations received (specifically diapers, feminine hygiene products and toiletries), and assisted with organizing the donations for distribution to the affected areas. On two occasions, Meredith traveled with President Maria Pardo Huete and President-Elect Kristen Koppel to impacted areas on donation deliveries.

While her primary client focus is on businesses, she also has good advice for the individual. Meredith suggests creating an emergency plan with your family, making sure to:

- Have a designated time that everyone calls to check-in during a disaster (she recommends picking a random time like 2:18 as cell towers are more likely to be busy on the hour and half hour than other times);
- Plan where everyone will meet and if you have dependents, how they will get to the designated spot; and
- If you do need to evacuate, keep all important documents and items in an easy to reach place so you can quickly grab them (i.e. insurance forms, passports, birth certificates, prescriptions).

Even though disaster preparation can be a daunting task, Meredith said starting early and thinking through issues helps preparation. “When you start talking out issues, you see where there are gaps,” she said. “Collaborative thinking shows you ways that you may not have thought about something or brings up ideas or issues you hadn’t thought of before.” Working on an emergency plan together makes it “a stronger plan because it isn’t just one person’s plan, it is the group’s plan.”

It is never too early to start preparing!

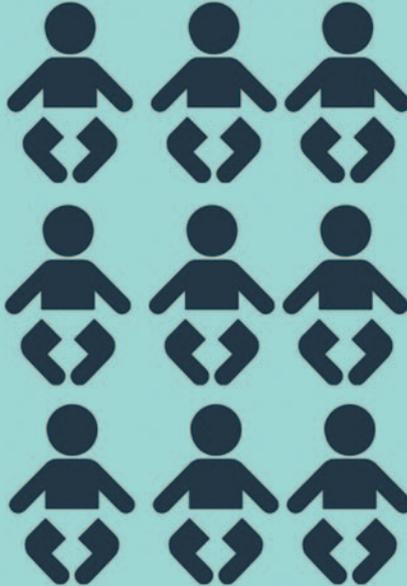
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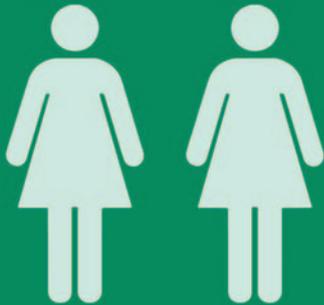
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League Faces



Annie Irvin, Adrian Anderson and Ty Salvant enjoying morning refreshments at the Nonprofit Fair. *Photo by: Jill Holland*



Carolyn Lewis, Nikki Jones and Mary Olivio pose for a quick pic after the presentation at the Nonprofit Fair. *Photo by: Jill Holland*



JLNO Book Club members (L-R) Mittie Kelleher, Linda Jackson, Ruthie Frierson and Marian Borgeois mingle before the meeting gets started. *Photo by: Michelle Sens*



Provisional member Merrill Ricketts was the lucky Girls Night Out winner at the September General Membership Meeting. *Photo by: Rana Francois*



Lagniappe Photography Assistant Editor, Stephanie Campani, being presented with the award of Most Valuable Photographer by Lagniappe Editors, Lea Witkowski-Purl and Amanda Goldman. *Photo by: Rana Francois*



Sustainer Kristi Friend. *Photo by: Rana Francois*



Sustainers Elizabeth Rodriguez and Elizabeth Webb taking a trip down memory lane in front of the archivist JLNO memory board. *Photo by: Rana Francois*



Sustainers Marietta Stirratt and Judy Gessner at Lambeth House for social hour. *Photo by: Michelle Sens*



Molly Massey, Archivist Chair (right), makes note of past Junior League members from Pat Mason at the Sustainer Connections Social. *Photo by: Michelle Sens*



Committee Member for the speaker series on women's health and wellness, Jessica Schulman, puts the final touches on a leftover Thanksgiving biscuit that is made with pumpkin and cormeal. *Photo by: Meghan Keating-Finneran*



Ochsner dietician, Rebecca Miller, discusses tips to prevent holiday weight gain as part of the JLNO health and wellness series. *Photo by: Meghan Keating-Finneran*



Shannon Zink purchases her Girls Night Out ticket during the October membership meeting from Evie Hunnicutt and Kristen Koppel. *Photo by: Michelle Sens*



President-Elect Kristen Koppel fills in for Maria at the noon October General Membership Meeting. *Photo by: Michelle Sens*



Lori Virdure and Cathy Barnett enjoy helping homeowner Jean Selders make some repairs to her house during Rebuilding Together. *Photo by: Michelle Sens*



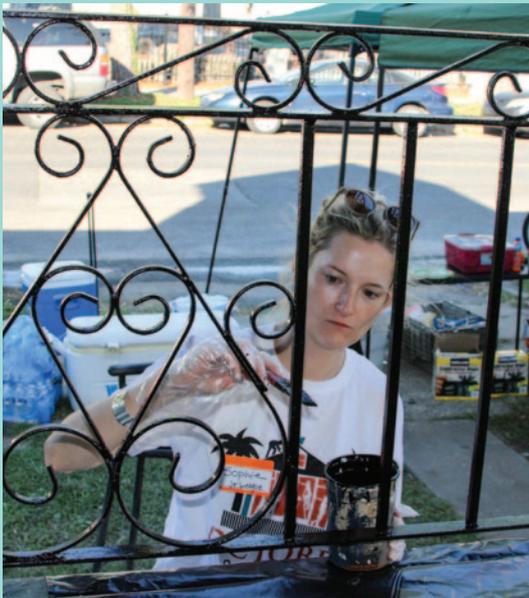
Lindsey Verdin scraping shutters before they can be painted as a part of Rebuilding Together. *Photo by: Michelle Sens*



TOP LEFT: League members share thoughts and ideas on improving the Junior League of New Orleans at the Audubon Park small group meeting. *Photo by: Jessica Whitworth*

TOP RIGHT: April Scott (center) leads the November small group meeting at Willa Jean. L-R Jeanne Higgins and Lindsey Labadie. *Photo by: Michelle Sens*

LEFT: Katelyn Harrell, Gretchen Burghardt and Lindsay Yenni were excited to start their morning off at Willa Jean during November's small group meetings. *Photo by: Michelle Sens*



Sophie Martinez hard at work on this cool October morning at Rebuilding Together. *Photo by: Michelle Sens*

Rebecca Hamilton and Meredith Duke getting their hands dirty scraping shutters during Rebuilding Together. *Photo by: Michelle Sens*



Skye Price, Ashley Price Swanson and Susan Price enjoy the Esprit Luncheon at Galatoire's Restaurant. *Photo by: Lacreia Jones*



Christine Vinson, Brandy Gilly and Maria Pardo Huete at the Esprit Luncheon at Galatoire's Restaurant. *Photo by: Lacreia Jones*



Melissa Stelly, Ashley Brennan and Stephanie Schneller at the Esprit Luncheon at Galatoire's Restaurant. *Photo by: Lacreia Jones*



Ladies from the Lee Michaels table enjoying themselves at the Inaugural Girls Night Out event. **BOTTOM L-R:** Samantha Stokes, Carey Sherman, Alexa Rotolo, Vanessa Berg, and Alex Kless. **TOP L-R:** Katherine Koerner, Caroline Good, Brooke Weinstein, Anna Labadie, and Adrienne Duncan. *Photo by: Jessica Whitworth*



Lori Olistter Green celebrates her big win with Beth Landry at the Tic Tac Toe table hosted by Alana Chester (background). *Photo by: Jessica Whitworth*



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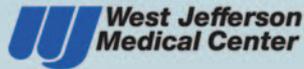
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Héritage

By Tara Quin-Hagmann

In August 2016 following a thunderstorm turned natural disaster, those of us in New Orleans looked on in disbelief as we witnessed an all too familiar scene: day-to-day routines disrupted and lives haphazardly unhinged as forces out of one's control took on a life of their own. News coverage of the event suddenly took the form of what can best be described as that of a familiar scent, only in this case the types of memories that came to mind elicited raw feelings of heartache, loss, despair and entire lives unraveling. It was akin to an unwanted house-guest asking to be let in just once more. Suddenly, for many members of the Junior League of New Orleans, it became clear what must be done, and paying it forward had never resonated so loudly nor so close to home. Through partnerships with other local businesses and foundations, within a week's time, JLNO Headquarters was filled with state-and-country-wide donations that included everything from pet supplies to baby formula.

Active involvement in humanitarian efforts by League members is hardly a new development. In fact, since the Junior League's inception, it has consistently assessed the ever-evolving needs of the individual communities served while also keeping attuned to the larger-scale, more global events of the time. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, as war-related efforts were increasingly chaired by Junior League chapters all across the United States in response to World War II, JLNO members were responsible not only for providing basic child-care services to families where the wife was called to work, but also for rallying for increased membership to the American Red Cross through days long membership drives. So, in August of 2016, when more than two feet of rainfall gave way to catastrophic flooding never before seen by many of our neighbors, the Junior League unwaveringly called to service the values passed down from our predecessors, core values so deeply rooted in our heritage that they are innate.

People often promise easier times "once the dust settles," implying that the road to recovery is both pre-determined and difficult to amend. Yet, the heart of the Junior League's philosophy that draws like-minded individuals is the mission and promise to come together in an attempt to defy odds for a greater good. In fact, our mission is as unfaltering now as it was in 1923 when a mere 10 women came together vowing to make a difference in the New Orleans community. Their vision is still evident today in all of JLNO's endeavors, and oh what a difference they've made.



TOP: Miss Lorraine Werlein and Miss Elizabeth Eustis work a booth at "Junior League Red Cross Day" on April 13, 1934.

BOTTOM: Another member is officially added to the New Orleans Chapter of the Red Cross as Mrs. Thomas A. Kirkland bestows a membership button upon Mrs. Henry Robinson.

Photos courtesy of the Louisiana State Museum Historical Center; Gift of the Junior League of New Orleans; Junior League of New Orleans Collection; Record Group 531, 2014.011.01 – 2014.016.039,

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