

The Impact

JUNIOR LEAGUE of JACKSON
Summer 2019

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From the President

Meredith Aldridge, 2018-2019 JLI President

When I was asked to serve as JLI President, I knew immediately that I wanted our organization to focus on deepening relationships in our community. I believed that if we spent our time connecting with those in our community, we could better meet real needs in real time. I also hoped that with a greater understanding of each other and our shared community, we could align our time and resources to make the greatest impact, now and in the future.

With this emphasis, we selected the theme "Creating Connections" for this League year. At every opportunity, we have encouraged our membership to listen and learn from one another – to intentionally recognize, value, and create the connections with all those around them.

As our valued partners in community service, we want to share with you the ways in which we have worked to create connections over the past several months. We also would love to hear your perspective on the past year and your thoughts on how we can better connect with our partners and those we serve. Indeed, this newsletter was created just a few years ago in an effort to communicate better with you!

We continue to see that it is when we are connected – relying on one another and sharing our gifts and strengths with each other – that we can truly make a difference.

Sincerely,
Meredith Aldridge



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Connecting Needs with Resources

Play, Eat, Learn

Parenting is no easy task, and resources can be less accessible for some. That is why we partner with University of Mississippi Medical Center's Center for the Advancement of Youth (CAY), the Mississippi Children's Museum, and St. Andrew's Episcopal School to provide a series of free parenting workshops.

We are thrilled to report that this year we moved the location of the project to the Mississippi Children's Museum and, by doing so, were able to double attendance. While League volunteers facilitated dinner and entertained children, parents and guardians listened to programs facilitated by CAY on children and ADHD, the science behind children's behavior, social media and relationships, and the importance of playtime.

Midtown Backpack & School Pantry Programs

According to the Mississippi Food Network, more than one in four Mississippi children go to bed hungry each night. Many students qualify for free or reduced lunch and breakfast, but when they leave school, their opportunities for nourishment virtually end. To combat childhood hunger for this group of young Mississippians, we partner with Mississippi Food Network to implement the Midtown Backpack and School Pantry Programs.

Each week JLI volunteers meet at Mississippi Food Network to pack food for the weekend for approximately 200 students at Johnson and Smith Elementary Schools in the Jackson Public School District.

The School Pantry at Johnson Elementary School provides families with access to healthy nutrition throughout the school year. On the second Thursday of each month, JLI volunteers work with Mississippi Food Network to stock shelves with shelf-stable foods as well as fresh produce. JLI volunteers also plan programs each month that focus on nutrition and physical fitness.

I Read More with My Buddy

Elementary-age children benefit immensely from reading aloud to others. However, many parents struggle to find time to read with their children on a regular basis.

To help fill this gap, we partner with the Barksdale Reading Institute to provide one-on-one reading sessions at Oak Forest Elementary School. JLI volunteers meet weekly with second and third graders who were reading below grade level when the school year began. The goal of the program is to improve fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Regular one-on-one interaction is key to the success of this program. Volunteers become role models for students as they encourage good reading habits, help develop vocabulary, and allow students to broaden their reading options.



JLI volunteers entertain children at the Mississippi Children's Museum so parents and guardians can attend parenting seminars.



JLI volunteers help parents of school children stock their pantries with healthy items at Johnson Elementary School.



Each week, volunteers provide students with a large selection of books. Dr. Seuss is always a favorite!

Connecting Communities Day of Service

On January 21, 2019, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, the Junior League of Jackson pulled together organizations and volunteers from across the Jackson metro area for our inaugural Connecting Communities Day of Service. More than 500 volunteers of all ages and backgrounds donated their time and energy to complete 10 simultaneous half-day service projects in our community.

Art from the Heart HeARTworks offers an artistic experience in a Christian environment to the homeless and needy in the community. Here, volunteers as young as 12 years old cleaned the art studio and stocked and organized the art supplies.



I Will Survive JLJ members worked alongside local students to create survival kits and activity packs that were distributed to community organizations in the Jackson metro area.

Keep Downtown Jackson Beautiful More than 75 teenage volunteers cleaned the neighborhood surrounding Stewpot, which included landscaping, disposing of garbage, and cleaning building exteriors.



Fill the Pie Volunteers donated toiletry items and school supplies for the Jackson Public Schools' Partners in Education (PIE) store. Additionally, volunteers sorted and packaged school supplies and uniforms.

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Luggage of Love Volunteers packed approximately 150 luggage bags with toiletries for foster children and victims of domestic violence in the Hinds County area.

Connecting Communities Day of Service

Power of Positivity Approximately 20 volunteers cleaned and painted the courtyard area outside the Jackson Public Schools District Office.

Revitalize West Jackson In partnership with Revitalize Mississippi, 30 volunteers helped clean and landscape vacant lots near the Rosemont Community Park so that the area can be later converted to landscaped community space.

Service from the Heart In partnership with HIS Heart Ministries, volunteers cleaned, painted, and decorated the hallways and doors of the children's wing at Calvary Baptist Church. They also organized the tutoring and supply closets and made the spaces more functional.



Thank You, First Responders Approximately 130 volunteers as young as 5 years old wrote thank-you notes to the community's first responders. Children and teenagers decorated and stuffed snack boxes and delivered them to police precincts and fire stations across Jackson.

Spread a Little Sunshine Twenty volunteers painted inspirational messages at Canopy Children's Solutions, reinforcing the children's value and self-worth.



Thank You to
Our Partners!

- Canopy Children's Solutions • HeARTworks
- HIS Heart Ministries at Calvary Baptist Church • Jackson Public Schools
- Operation Shoestring • Revitalize Mississippi • Stewpot

Connecting with Our Members

While voluntarism and community service are the lifeblood of the Junior League of Jackson, developing the potential of our members and facilitating leadership and training opportunities are also at the heart of our mission.

The League offers a number of leadership and training opportunities for members each year through our Membership Training and Development programs, such as Yoga and Mindfulness, Organizing Your Life, Savvy Women Know Their Finances, and We are Movement Makers.

Our Emerging Leaders program allows those who are early in their League service to develop skills they will need to be future leaders in our organization. This year, 13 women were selected to participate in this focused leadership training.

This year, the League further affirmed its dedication to developing the potential of women by creating a board position for the express purpose of membership training, hosting two community roundtables, and soliciting member feedback through a targeted feedback campaign.

In June of 2018, we partnered with the Women's Foundation of Mississippi to offer the inaugural "She's on Board," a women's board training program open to all women in the community. The event was so successful that we will be holding the second annual "She's on Board" program June 21, 2019, at JLJ Headquarters.



2018-2019 Emerging Leaders Participants



JLJ Active member Zonzie McLaurin, Communications VP Bethany Smith, and Training and Organizational Development VP Katherine Bryant attend the April Community Roundtable featuring leadership coach Dima Ghawi.



Former JLJ Presidents Charlotte Seals (left) and Mary Purvis (center) pose with President-Elect LaKeysha Greer Isaac at She's on Board.

Making Our Connections Possible

Our work in the community would not be possible without your generous support, but we also strive to do our part to fund our community projects. Our three fund development businesses bring in more than \$1 million each year to fund our mission.

JLJ raises more than \$1 million annually to support our work.

JUNIOR LEAGUE JUMBLE January 31 and February 2, 2019



Five years ago, the League transitioned from our storefront fundraiser, Bargain Boutique, and introduced a new fund development endeavor – Junior League Jumble – which it billed as “the ultimate rummage sale.” Since then, the event has lived up to its reputation as a bargain hunter’s paradise while raising thousands of dollars to support the work of the League.

With more than 1,000 tickets sold and total revenues over \$85,000, Jumble 2019 surpassed all expectations. Following the sale, the League’s community partners were invited to take any leftover merchandise that might benefit them, and 14 community partners took advantage of this opportunity. Goodwill reported their highest sales in the days following their receipt of the Jumble merchandise.

“The Junior League Jumble was such a blessing to Methodist Children’s Homes of MS! The ladies of Junior League worked with us to get affordable prices to outfit an entirely empty office building with desks, paintings, chairs, and more! They allowed us to stay in budget which ultimately means we can serve more kids! Thank you, JLJ! “

-Mandy Bufkin, Volunteer and Communication Officer, Methodist Children’s Homes



Thousands of items were donated to help make this year’s Jumble a success!



Shoppers line up to get first dibs on all the good deals.

Making Our Connections Possible

TOUCH A TRUCK® JACKSON

March 29-30, 2019



For the sixth year in a row, JJJ volunteers transformed an average parking lot into an interactive, truck-filled wonderland for children from across the Jackson metropolitan area. On March 29-30, Touch A Truck® Jackson once again served as the intersection of make-believe and reality as children were given the opportunity to explore, climb, and touch emergency response vehicles, heavy machinery, and other equipment.

Touch A Truck® Jackson mixes education with play to provide children with a one-of-a-kind learning experience. This year, STREAM (science, technology, reading, engineering, art, and math) interactive stations were located throughout the event. Guests also enjoyed the return of the Reading & Arts

tent, which featured local celebrity readers throughout the day as well as a collaborative art project. Bricks 4 Kidz offered another hands-on activity that allowed visitors to focus on STEM concepts. Approximately 50 exhibitors provided hands-on opportunities for guests to “dig in” and create a memorable learning experience.

This year we also introduced Touch A Truck® UNPLUGGED, an event designed for those with noise sensitivities. Horns and sirens were silenced as JJJ volunteers welcomed approximately 130 guests for a sensory-friendly Touch A Truck experience.

One of the highlights of Touch A Truck® Jackson for our volunteers is Field Trip Friday, where local public-school students are invited to attend the event at no cost to their schools or families. More than 900 students, plus their teachers and chaperones, participated in this year’s Field Trip Friday.

Thanks to the generous support of our corporate sponsors and community partners and our volunteers’ countless hours of work, Touch A Truck® Jackson 2019 raised more than \$66,000.



Students attending Field Trip Friday line up for an up-close look inside a firetruck.



Children wait in line to play “construction worker” and get a lesson on how this excavator operates.

Future Connections



LaKeysha Greer Isaac
JJJ President 2019-2020

The new League year for the Junior League of Jackson begins June 1, but that does not mean that our commitment to fostering connections will end in May. LaKeysha Greer Isaac will take over as JJJ President for the 2019-2020 League year, and we hope you will join us in looking forward to the good work that the League will continue to do as we search for ways to create connections.

