

Summer 2017 Newsletter



JUNIOR LEAGUE OF
EAU CLAIRE

2016-2017 Junior League of Eau Claire Leadership Team

President: Courtney Kanz
President-Elect: Sue Mertens
Past President: Katie Walk
Secretary: Leslie Lyons
Treasurer: Amy Weiss



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Wow! What a year! I am incredibly proud and simply amazed by what we've accomplished. Our impact on the people of our community was nothing short of impressive and demonstrated the various ways our members are building a better community.

Donations: We assembled tutus for Girls on the Run, which provided a boost of confidence for girls running their first 5k. We provided costumes to Family Promise of Chippewa Valley so that children were able to enjoy Halloween without their parents having to worry about how they were going to afford a costume. We contributed to Once Upon a Prom and ensured high school girls were able to not only experience Prom but to do so with confidence. Finally, we donated items to the Child Advocacy Center and I can guarantee there is a child still sleeping with a stuffed animal donated by one of you. It might be his or her only sense of security in this world.

Volunteering: We served a meal to families in need at the Community Table and packed food for children at Feed My People. We also participated both financially and through voluntarism at Literacy Chippewa Valley's Scrabble Bee, a fundraiser that supports a wonderful organization with their efforts to provide literacy training to individuals that want to thrive in our community but are faced with a huge roadblock of not being able to read.

Focus Programs: We made a huge impact on our community this year donating almost 5,000 diapers, 1,000 wipes and will soon be donating over \$3,000 to Feed My People Food Bank. That is a lot of babies who will be clean, dry and healthy because of the work that we do! Likewise, through our Kids in the Kitchen program we made significant progress in stemming the growth of childhood obesity. An unbelievable amount of fourth graders took part in our program: 798 kids representing 12 schools. In addition, over 150 volunteers, chaperones, teachers and parents gained exposure to the Junior League and the work that we do to improve our community.

Financially: Through the Junior League of Eau Claire Endowment Fund, we distributed \$1,840 to Fierce Freedom, an organization tackling human trafficking head on. We also participated in a new joint fundraiser, the Giving Gala, which raised almost \$1,700 on behalf of our focus programs.

We accomplished all of this while learning more about our community, supporting each other and building lasting friendships. These are the reasons I am passionate about the Junior League and so proud to talk to others in our community about the work the Junior League does. We all have busy lives, we are all working to find just one more hour in each day but we all feel a sense of responsibility to give to those in need and make a difference in the lives of others.

I am so proud to be a part of this organization because of each of you and I am excited to lead the Junior League of Eau Claire through yet another year of making a lasting impact on our community. Thank you all for making this year a huge success!

Sincerely,
Courtney Kanz

2017 JLEC Endowment Fund Recipient: Fierce Freedom

It is always interesting to review the grant requests that come through the Eau Claire Community Foundation (ECCF). It is a wonderful way to learn about nonprofit organizations in the area and the various ways they are working to address issues impacting our community. This year, one organization stood out to be the recipient of the JLEC funds being held at the ECCF. That organization is Fierce Freedom. Fierce Freedom is a local nonprofit that started in 2008. Its purpose is to educate the public about human trafficking. They work with community members, law enforcement, legislators, and members of the hotel industry. They are partnering with Visit Eau Claire and the Eau Claire Police Department for their campaign, Be Aware. The focus is to “train hotel staff how to recognize human trafficking and how to protect those who may be in danger.” This year’s JLEC grant amount of \$1,840 will help support this endeavor.



One area AJLI has targeted to make an impact is education about human trafficking. At the JLEC Spring Banquet, Leah Calvin shared information she learned while attending the AJLI Annual Conference. The fit between what AJLI is doing and what Fierce Freedom is doing is perfect! Jodi Emerson, Director of Public Policy and Community Relations of Fierce Freedom, attended our Spring Banquet and shared information about the organization, as well as touching stories of how human trafficking is present in places you would not expect, including right here in our community. I know there were a few tears shed during her talk as we listened to how lives are negatively impacted by human trafficking and how they can be positively affected by the programs of Fierce Freedom. To learn more about Fierce Freedom and ways you can support them, visit their website: fiercefreesdom.org.

In the fall of 2017 I will be starting my final year as the JLEC liaison to the ECCF. I have enjoyed every minute of it and feel lucky to have had the opportunity to get involved with the Foundation. If this might be a role you are interested in, feel free to ask me about it! I'd love to share my experience with you!
-Leslie Lyons



Want to get more involved in shaping Junior League for the future? Looking for leadership experience? Join the Junior League of Eau Claire Board of Directors!

Being in a leadership role is a great way to continue your growth and development within the organization and to get more involved with the inner workings of Junior League. It is an eye-opening, rewarding experience that is also a lot of fun! **We are still searching for a President-Elect for 2017-2018!** The President-Elect spends the year participating in Board activities, provides input on key decisions and prepares to take over as President the following year. This role is integral to ensuring our organization thrives for years into the future.

If the President-Elect role does not pique your interest, we also have other optional Board positions available such as (but not limited to): Director of Community Relations, Director of Finance and others!

2016-2017 Spring Banquet



Junior League of Eau Claire held their annual banquet on May 25 at Houligans. The banquet included a recap of the year, speakers, presentation of charms to membership, installation of our new members and social time before and after the banquet.

Jodi Emerson from Fierce Freedom, the JL Endowment Fund grant recipient, gave a heartfelt speech detailing how their organization has developed a strong education platform and collaborates with the local police department to stop and prevent human trafficking. Membership has expressed an interest in learning more about how to support and help Fierce Freedom in their mission. We look forward to learning more about this challenging social issue.

Leah Calvin attended the AJLI Annual Conference this year in Minneapolis. She did an outstanding job representing Eau Claire and recapping her experience for us. Leah's recap included a high level overview of workshops, speakers and events. Leah's passion is contagious and she inspired us to think globally and act locally. Many thanks to Leah for her time and insight. See page 5 for more information about Leah's experience at the conference.

Our sustainer representatives, Marianne Klinhammer and Lynn Stark, were honored at the banquet. They have been instrumental in growing our sustainer base this year and we are very grateful for their support. Connecting the past and present is critical to our organization and they have both given freely of their time, talent and connections. Many thanks to Marianne and Lynn. We are thrilled they will continue in this role for the next year!

Our newest members were installed as Active members at the banquet. They are smart, passionate and gave their time and talent to the organization. We are pleased to announce the following members are now Active members of Junior League of Eau Claire:

- Leah Calvin
- Nicolle Davison
- Madeleine Foster
- Jessica Joyce
- Tracey Samuelson

We are lucky to have them!



Shout out to Katie Walk who organized this event (and many others this year)! Katie has done an outstanding job leading us as Past President and continuing to share her passion and time with Junior League of Eau Claire. Thank you Katie!

Congratulations to the 2017-2018 Board Members!

President: Courtney Kanz Treasurer: Amy Weiss President Elect: Open
Secretary: Nicolle Davison Director of Membership: Sue Mertens

Kids in the Kitchen Update

The 2016-2017 school year was extremely busy for Kids in the Kitchen! Overall, 12 out of 13 ECASD public elementary schools participated in the field trip program. That's almost 800 fourth graders that were impacted by Junior League of Eau Claire's program!

The Kids in the Kitchen program consisted of a field trip to Forage at Banbury Place where students rotated between three stations: kitchen, physical activity, and arts/crafts. In the kitchen, students prepared fresh fruit, vegetables, roasted red pepper hummus, and quinoa chili. All students created a variety of art projects including Popsicle stick collaborative framed art, pony bead bracelets & backpack keychains, and T-shirt book bags. All students worked up an appetite with 30 minutes of Zumba tailored to fourth graders' abilities.

A huge THANK YOU to the volunteers that made this experience possible! We had 30 volunteers (10 were JLEC provisionals/members) and many volunteers came three or more times, 15 high students from the Wildlands Charter School (many of which volunteered multiple times) and 137 parent chaperones from the schools. We would also like to recognize the passion and commitment from JLEC member Valerie Bestland who worked tirelessly to ensure the success of the program. The program would not be where it is today without her!

All kids completed a survey and sent very funny and cute Thank You notes! Kids, parents and school staff all agreed this is the very best field trip they have been to!



Junior League expresses our sincere thank you to the students and teachers at Wildlands Charter School for helping with Kids in the Kitchen!

Wildlands Charter School is a partnership between the [Augusta School District](#) and [Beaver Creek Reserve](#) and is one of the few teacher-led schools in the country. Wildlands is a project-based learning school with a research and science focus. The staff is a functional teachers' cooperative; the teachers run the school. This includes handling the administrative needs of the school, transportation and all school operations.

Wildlands tries to maintain a student body of 60. Twenty students in seventh and eighth grade complete the Middle School and 40 in the high school, approximately 10 students in each grade level. Maintaining a student body of 60 allows them to keep the low student teacher ratio, and the ability to travel, both of which are core to Wildlands.

Wildlands students participated in six fieldtrips this year and have committed to volunteering again next year. We are so grateful for their commitment to the Kids in the Kitchen program!

Reflections from the AJLI Conference by Leah Calvin

I learned so much at the AJLI Annual Conference in May! There was a lot of talk on the “transformation rollout”. JL has been doing things pretty much the same way since the early 1900’s, yet the role of woman has changed dramatically since that time. JL wants to make sure they stay relevant and impactful. I really loved listening to this conversation, and hearing how AJLI is trying to anticipate problems and attack them before they become an issue. I’m very impressed with the forethought and passion of the people running JL. I was already excited to join the Eau Claire chapter, but seeing all the things that the other Junior Leagues do really doubled that passion! We are a small part of a huge, and truly impactful group of woman.



My favorite sessions to attend were the ones on Human Trafficking and Publicity. The Human Trafficking situation is terrible and makes me sick to think about it, but the session was fantastic. It was very encouraging to hear everything we are doing to try to stop Human Trafficking. There are some very smart, very dedicated people working on this issue, and I’m excited to join them and make an impact right here in Eau Claire. The session on Publicity was interesting in a totally different manner. Prior to staying home with my kids, I was a behind-the-scenes-number-cruncher. I’ve never had to carefully craft a message for a large audience, and I had no idea everything that goes into that! It isn’t just what you say, or how you say it, but what you don’t say, what you’re wearing, who the person is delivering the message, the format you’re using, and the means of delivery. The people who do this professionally consider ALL of that when crafting a message. I’m not sure I’ll ever have an opportunity to put this knowledge to use, but I really enjoyed learning about it, and it’s caused me to look at some public statements a little differently. I really had a great time at convention and I hope I can attend again in the future.



-Leah Calvin



THANK YOU!!

We are incredibly grateful to the following members who contributed financially in support of JLEC’s General Fund, Kids in the Kitchen program and/or the Diaper Bank through our sustainer outreach and membership dues renewal process. Thank you for your generosity and commitment to our mission!

Dorothy Anderson
Cindy Bammel
Kay Beardsley
Linda Bohacek

Leah Calvin
Patty Cigan
Liz Falkner
Donna Gilbertson

Betsy Kell
Nancy Kersten
Marianne Klinkhammer
Nicole Lasker

Adrienne Leland
Marla Mernitz
Nancy Mickelson
Kaye Senn

JLEC Spring Fundraiser: The Giving Gala

JLEC's largest fundraiser of the year took place on May 19th at the Lismore Hotel: The Giving Gala. In an effort to encourage collaboration among nonprofits, JLEC, Camp Manitou (YMCA) and Girls on the Run of the Chippewa Valley teamed up to host an evening of cocktails, appetizers and live music provided by Tim Sullivan and Josh Gallagher, The CamCats and Blugold Radio. The event was a huge success - through sponsorships, ticket sales and silent auction proceeds, each organization received almost \$1,700.



Girls on the Run and Camp Manitou used proceeds from the event for program scholarships while JLEC divided the proceeds between our two focus programs. Thank you to everyone who helped plan the event, provided sponsorship for the event and those that attended. The event would not have been a success without you! The three organizations plan to partner again next year for a similar event, which is tentatively scheduled for February 16th. If you would like to be a part of the planning committee or are interested in sponsorship opportunities, please let Courtney Kanz know!



Thank you
to our sponsors
for their support!



Upcoming Dates & Events



*Save the
Date!!*



Kick off Event (BUNCO) Monday, September 18th at 6:30 pm, From the Vine

Membership is the key to our success and our greatest asset. For the past several years, it has been difficult to retain members and attract new members. We are committed to offering our membership a great experience and connection to the Eau Claire community.

Last year we held a Kick-off Event that recruited 5 new members to Junior League. We hope to repeat that success this year. This year we are partnering with our bunco babes (sustainers) for our kick-off. The event details are below:

From the Vine Wine Room (2526 Golf Road, Eau Claire)
Monday September 18, 6:30pm
Prizes, Wine and Chocolate
Casual (Jeans)
Cost \$5.00

Please invite your neighbors, friends, colleagues, past Junior League members or anyone that might be interested in a fun night out. We will have a brief overview of JLEC and play two games of bunco. Come for all or part of the evening!

Bring a friend and I will buy you a glass of wine!
-Sue Mertens

2017-2018 JLEC Calendar (Tentative)

Monday, Sept. 18 – Fall Kick Off (Bunco), From the Vine 6:30pm
Thursday, Oct. 19 – General Membership Meeting, RCU, 6:30pm
Thursday, Nov. 16 – General Membership Meeting, RCU, 6:30pm
Saturday, Dec. 2 – JLEC Holiday Party, SideBAR on Grand, 7pm
Thursday, Jan. 18 – General Membership Meeting, RCU, 6:30pm
Friday, Feb. 16 – Giving Gala, Lismore Hotel, 7pm
Thursday, March 15 – General Membership Meeting, RCU, 6:30pm
Thursday, April 19 – Spring Social (TBD)
Thursday, May 17 – Spring Banquet (TBD)