

THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF CEDAR RAPIDS

FY21 Report to the
Community



We literally can't sit still.

The Junior League of Cedar Rapids (JLCR) is made up of more than 100 passionate, dedicated and innovative women volunteering to make a difference in their communities. As a 501(c)3 organization that is part of the Association of Junior Leagues International (AJIL), we abide by our mission as a group of “women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable.” We focus on volunteer work, professional networking and training, and furthering issues of diversity and equality. The JLCR is open to all women at least 21 years of age.

The 2020-2021 League year started as a year of so many unknowns. We were still deep in a pandemic, hoping it would be over soon, not knowing it would still be in our lives at the end of the League year. We had a derecho not far into our future, which would turn our community upside down. We had a new Governance and Management team that was piloting for the first time. We had sight on a new 5-year strategic plan that was to be built from scratch. But, throughout ups and downs of this wild year, we held the position that “with uncertainty comes opportunity.” While this year was stressful and uncertain at times, we fed off of this to create opportunities for ourselves and the future JLCR members.

Members continued to do almost all meetings online to keep everyone safe from exposure to COVID-19. This very much decreased our social interaction, which many of us thoroughly enjoy about being a member of Junior League. We tried to make the best of the situation, but it taught us a different way to communicate and allowed us to be more diverse in our communication with members and allowed for better flexibility for members when needed.

Letter from the President

Community Council changed portions of our project to be mindful of the safety of our members and the youth we serve. This pushed us to be innovative and adaptable to any situation, but to still move our project forward. We were also challenged with how to serve the youth which were affected by the derecho and ensuring that their needs were met, even if those needs were different than what we may have served in the past.

Lastly, we changed a large portion of our fundraising strategies and budget in order to ensure that we were able to continue to support our projects and members in the best way possible. With not having an extreme change in our environment like this since the 2008 floods, we had to learn to manage and made quick decisions in an ever-changing environment. Our Fund Development Council did wonderful work brainstorming new fundraising ideas to keep the funds coming in. Our Treasurer and Operations Council constantly managed our dollars and budget to ensure we were going to be able to get through the fiscal year. All of this taught us that we need to be prepared with various and more flexible strategies.

Overall, it was a very successful year. We executed the new Governance and Management team strategies very well, we were able to create an achievable 5-year strategic plan, learned to be adaptable, and most importantly we continued to support our community, community partners, and youth without interruption. After getting through a League year like this, I am confident our League will continue to make great strides forward in supporting our community and the JLCR members we serve.

Nicole Kintzle
JLCR 2020-2021 President

GUIDE. ADVOCATE. PROVIDE.

JLCR has made it our on-going focus to support young people aging out of foster care in Linn and surrounding counties through the Bridging the G.A.P. (Guide, Advocate, Provide) project. Young people who age out of foster care often lack traditional supports, including financial knowledge and resources, housing, life skills and more. By partnering with community agencies and leveraging JLCR efforts, we are able to impact many young people who otherwise may “fall between the cracks” in our communities.

THE CHALLENGE AT A GLANCE

Only three percent of young people who age out of foster care earn a college degree. Fifty percent of youth who age out of foster care will develop a substance abuse issue. As much as seventy percent of females who age out of foster care will become pregnant by age 21.



GUIDE.

In Project Guide, we partner with community groups to provide meals at a bi-weekly peer support and life skills group for youth who have been or are in foster care placement. It is an opportunity to provide a reliable, healthy and home-cooked meal for 10-30 youth twice a month and talk with the youth during the meal. Youth also participate in life-skills lessons and peer support activities to help them process emotions and experiences, and prepare them for independent living.

ADVOCATE.

In Project Advocate, we learn about the issues and barriers facing youth in the foster care system and when they age out in order to better advocate for their needs. We host speakers and share resources to learn more about the current environment, and what the youth we serve might be facing. Annually, we travel to the Iowa state capitol to speak with lawmakers on the challenges youth in foster care face. Unfortunately, this traditional trip was canceled due to COVID.

PROVIDE.

In Project Provide, we help fill gaps that young adults may face when they age out of foster care, including first apartment basics, housing expenses, books and supplies for higher education and training, and more. We have pioneered the Apartment in a Suitcase basic supplies project, the Housing First program and more to help provide the items young adults need to start their independent lives on the right foot.

Check out our three pillars in more detail on the next page

PROJECT

GUIDE.

Project Guide within the Bridging the G.A.P. initiative focuses on providing social-emotional and life skills support for youth currently in foster care or who have aged out of foster care. We partner with Foundation 2 Crisis Services and the Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP) group in Cedar Rapids to provide meals and program support at their bi-weekly meetings. Because of JLCR, the Cedar Rapids-based group is the only one in Iowa that receives a meal at each meeting.

This year,
members served

300*

meals to AMP youth.



PROJECT

ADVOCATE.

Project Advocate within the Bridging the G.A.P. initiative focuses on supporting youth in foster care from policy and advocacy standpoint. As we learn more about local issues facing young adults in our communities, we feel compelled to advocate for them to receive fair care, access to resources and more.

During our online trivia fundraiser we shared facts about foster youth in our community to over 156 trivia teams.

Additionally we often share these types of statistics in our social media posts.

THE CHALLENGE AT A GLANCE

Of young people who age out of foster care...

- **3%** earn a college degree
- **50%** will develop a substance abuse issue
- **70%** of females, by the age of 21, will become pregnant

Your Donation Can Help Us Bridge the GAP!

[@JLCR-JuniorLeagueofCedarRapids](https://www.venmo.com/@JLCR-JuniorLeagueofCedarRapids)

Note: if Venmo asks for a 4-digit number, it is "7430"



PROVIDE.

Project Provide within the Bridging the G.A.P. initiative focuses on providing physical items many young people need as they establish their independence. These are often items that young adults get from their support network and can be expensive to purchase all at once.

APARTMENT IN A SUITCASE

The Apartment in a Suitcase project provides the basics for independent living and is provided at no cost to young adults aging out of foster care. These are often gaps that are created when a young person doesn't have a strong support system.

19 suitcases distributed

\$700 value per suitcase

59 items per suitcase

HOUSING FIRST PROJECT

Launched in 2018, the JLCR Housing First Project provides one year of rent-assistance for a select number of teens and young adults who have aged out of foster care in Cedar Rapids. Working with the Foundation 2 Crisis Services' Independent Living Program, we pay 100 percent of participants' rent for six months before reducing the financial support by one third every three months. The young adults work with a support network to learn about budgeting and life skills, with the goal that they will be more financially stable after the year of assisted housing through JLCR.

"I'd like to thank the Junior League housing program. They helped me pay rent while I more than doubled my savings, moved to a new place, and got settled in. None of it would have been possible without their help. I'm more than grateful for the opportunity to grow through the program, thank you! I saved over \$1000 in that year.

~ Kassie, a JLCR Housing Program participant

JLCR SCHOLARSHIP FUND

We know that young adults often incur unplanned expenses - from moving expenses to books for school - that can derail their tight budgets. Without a safety net of friends, family or financial knowledge, youth who have aged out of foster care can be facing homelessness or other risks very quickly.

The JLCR Scholarship Fund offers needs-based scholarships for a variety of expenses the young people we serve face, including unexpected car repairs, technology for school and utilities. In 2020-2021, we granted more than \$8,300 in scholarships to youth in Cedar Rapids and surrounding communities.

"I just wanted to reach out to say thank you for all the help that you have offered me throughout the years. Without your help, I would have probably struggled a lot more than what I did. The scholarship funds have really helped me with my insurance, schoolbooks, and living. I truly appreciate everything that you do and have done for me. I hope all is well!"

~ Paige, a scholarship recipient and F2 client who recently aged out of foster care

DONE IN A DAY PROJECTS

Done in a Day (DIAD) and Done in a Meeting (DIAM) projects provide high-impact volunteer opportunities throughout the year without large time commitments. This year, our five DIAD and two DIAM projects included hands-on opportunities, donation drives, and more.



TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

One of the pillars of JLCR is the opportunity to diversify members' professional and community experience through various high-quality and meaningful training workshops and trips. JLCR provides financial support to help members attend local and national trainings that may otherwise be unattainable.



CONTINUING OUR PANDEMIC RESPONSE

FUNDRAISING

Our major annual fundraiser, the Fostering Strength luncheon, was again cancelled for 2021. Although, we are excited to bring it back in 2022!

In 2021, we sparked even more creativity with our fundraising. Corporate Sponsorships were a major part of our fundraising efforts, raising more than \$25,000. We are extremely grateful for our community partners.

Our Sustainer Challenge raised over \$7,800. Our Sustainers continue to be a huge part of our growth for the Junior League of Cedar Rapids, in both mentorship and fundraising. Other fundraising projects included our Unstoppable 5k, post Derecho food & donation drive, online trivia, and more.

MEETINGS

After switching to virtual-only meetings in spring 2020, pioneering the virtual option unlike we had ever done before, we offered both virtual and in person in 2021. The in-person option brought members back together and fulfilled some of the in-person connections we all missed, while still observing social distancing guidelines.



COMMUNITY NEED

Just as in 2020, the coronavirus pandemic also impacted the young people we serve, including increased job loss and financial challenges, a lack of social networks and support, and increase risk for poor mental health. As a result, we saw an increase in scholarship asks and tailored our projects to fill the current needs. We allocated excess funding from projects that had been suspended due to social distancing and filled more scholarship requests and provided more in-kind needs, including food and gas cards.

FY21 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MANGEMENT TEAM



Our JLCR Board of Directors are chosen each year through an application and interview process. Their charge is to govern JLCR in the way that they best see fit, keeping in mind the organization’s mission, by-laws, history, and future.

- Top Row
- Katie Curtis, President Elect
- Emily Teeter, Secretary
- Amanda Lane, Treasurer
- Bottom Row
- Katie Helgens, Nominating Chair
- Jess Netolicky, EVP Management
- Not pictured: Nicole Kintzle, President



Our JLCR Management Team is chosen each year through an application and interview process. Their charge is to ...

- Top Row
- Elyse Garlock, At-Large Member
- Jenna Schoenhofer, VP Communications
- Amanda Zhorne, VP Community
- Heidi Goettsch, VP Fund Development
- Bottom Row
- Carrie Kellogg, VP Operations
- Samantha Rogers, VP Membership
- Kelsey Veldhuizen, Executive Vice President Assistant

AT A GLANCE FINANCIALS

ASSETS		TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$25,395
Cash	\$129,296	Net Assets	
Endowment	\$269,910	Unrestricted	\$404,863
Accounts Receivable	\$2,076		
Certificate of Deposit	\$28,528		
Fixed Assets	-	TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$404,863
Other Assets	\$270,357		
TOTAL ASSETS	\$430,258	TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$430,258

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	\$3,439
Deferred Revenues - Dues	\$19,438
PPP Loan	\$2, 518

ANNUAL MEETING AWARD RECIPIENTS

In May 2021, JLCR hosted our annual meeting to close the FY21 Junior League year and celebrate the year's accomplishments.

The following members and community partners received awards due to their impact with JLCR in the last year.

Unsung Hero Award - Alex Hierl

With the challenges of 2020, regular funding sources were suddenly no longer available to us. The demand for our support increased by over 20% this year and with Alex's diligence and consistency with the grant applications we were able to maintain the increased requests from foster youth.

Spirit Award - Alishia Klocke

Alishia has put in countless hours and endless effort to champion the youth that attend AMP. She rallied those around to join her and has made a real difference!

JLCR Leadership Award - Heidi Goettsch

Heidi led her team to rethink how JLCR could conduct our fundraising activities in safe ways but also engage members at the same time. She helped fund development execute successful new events as well as revamping our sponsorship program. She worked tirelessly and led her team to step up and commit to working hard as well.

Wheels in Motion Award - Amanda Zhorne

A Sometimes chairs can get lost among our busy schedules, but not Amanda, even with opening a new business and COVID! She is very dedicated, kind and always makes herself accessible. She is wonderful and dedicated to our community!

Rising Star Award - Delaney Dehnke

Delaney was in the new member class this year and has been dedicated to everything JLCR. She is an At-Large Member in her first year of League! She has made an impact and has truly made the most of her first year.

Honorary Members Award - Renae Koth

Renae is our person on the "front lines" and can communicate the specific needs of the foster youth/alumni. She is a wonderful help to JLCR

Sustainer of the Year Award - Hilery Livengood

She created a sustainer letter that has kept the sustainers in the loop for this year which has not been happening for many years!

Robert O. Daniel Community Service Award - United Way of East Central Iowa

UWECI supported JLCR's efforts for Derecho and Covid recovery in a significant way this year. They also generated so much financial support from across the country that benefited local businesses and organizations in this community, as well as spotlighting all the amazing volunteer efforts that took place this past year.

JLCR SPONSORS

Thank you to everyone who supports JLCR projects through sponsorships. We appreciate your support!

Green State

CarePro

Cottage Grove Estates

David Maier and Matt McGrane

Farmers State Bank

Foundation 2

Heartland Express

Hills Bank

UIPAT - District Council 81

Toyota Financial Services

United Fire Group

University of Iowa Health Care

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