

THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF CEDAR RAPIDS

Report to the Community FY22

(June 2021 - May 2022)

**IMPACTING OUR
COMMUNITY FOR
MORE THAN
85 YEARS**



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Fostering transformational leadership through values:

- **Community**
- **Service**
- **Leadership**
- **Respect**
- **Empowerment**
- **Collaboration**
- **Diversity**

LEADING CHANGE. TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES.

The Junior League of Cedar Rapids (JLCR) is made up of more than 200 active and sustaining members. We are passionate, dedicated and innovative women volunteering to make a difference in our 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 whose mission is to advance women’s leadership for meaningful community impact through volunteer action, collaboration, and training. Our 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.

Thank you for your continued support of the Junior League of Cedar Rapids. This year our league theme was Joy and Connection. After two years of virtual meetings and postponed events, we were eager to spend time together all while making an impact in the community. While there were a couple of virtual meetings and pivots along the way, by the Annual Meeting in May, we could hear the hum that only a Junior League meeting can create. We enjoyed each other’s company and celebrated our wins for the year!

Our membership team focused on offering a robust variety of training and development opportunities. Training and development ranged from financial literacy and leadership to yoga and setting boundaries. On a couple of occasions, Past Presidents offered their time and shared lessons learned from their time in league. We loved hearing about their experiences and were able to draw some meaningful takeaways from their days in leadership. These opportunities helped us keep Junior League’s mission to develop and train women at the forefront of our work.

We brought back Fostering Strength in the spring after two years off. The event committee worked tirelessly amidst the everchanging public health and safety recommendations. We were so grateful to have Janiva Magness join us as our guest speaker. Her raw and honest explanation of the foster care system was moving and helped us raise over \$10,875 in donations the day of our event. We can’t wait to host this event again in the spring of 2023.

Bridging the G.A.P. continues to thrive as our league project. This is the longest JLCR has worked on a single project. We make an impact through the Apartment in a Suitcase Project, our scholarship program, and the Housing First Program. Collectively, this project is supporting over 150 young adults annually who have either aged out of the Iowa foster care system or are active in the foster care system.

Most importantly, we had a large incoming cohort of new league members. It is truly inspirational to see our different committees integrate new members into the fold, leverage their strengths, and connect them with meaningful relationships and training opportunities. Junior League continues to be the premiere leadership organization for women and our incoming leadership and members only reinforce the positive impact we will continue to have in the community.

With gratitude,

Katie Curtis
President 2021-2022

Letter from the President



Katie Curtis
President 2021-2022



GUIDE. ADVOCATE. PROVIDE.

Junior League of Cedar Rapids has made it our ongoing 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 aging out of foster care often lack traditional support, 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

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

3% earn a college degree

50% will develop a substance use issue

70% of females, by the age of 21, will become pregnant

*Source: Supporting Young People Transitioning from Foster Care: Findings from a National Survey, 2017.

From June 2021 - May 2022 JLCR provided the following:



280 +

meals for youth at the bi-monthly AMP group for youth in foster care.



33

Apartment in a Suitcase kits with basic supplies for independent living, including kitchen wares, bedding, and cleaning supplies



\$9,100+

in scholarships for young people who have aged out of foster care for expenses including car repairs, textbooks, and more.

each containing more than **65 items**

and valued at over **\$700**

Housing support for

4

young people who have aged out of foster care.



The Housing First Project provides rental assistance for young people who have aged out of foster care. The program covers 100 percent of the monthly rent for 6 months, and then steps down to 33 percent by the end of the year. Participants work to create and stick to a budget to work toward financial stability.

See more detail on our three project initiatives on the following pages.

BRIDGING THE G.A.P.

GUIDE

The Project Guide 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. It is an opportunity to provide a healthy home-cooked meal for youth and a chance to interact with them before/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.

Because of JLCR, the Cedar Rapids-based group is the only one in Iowa that receives a meal at each meeting. Unfortunately, many AMP meetings were virtual this year due to the ongoing pandemic. Meals could not be provided at these meetings. Those held in person also had lower attendance causing the total numbers served to be much lower than past years.



Last year, members served

280

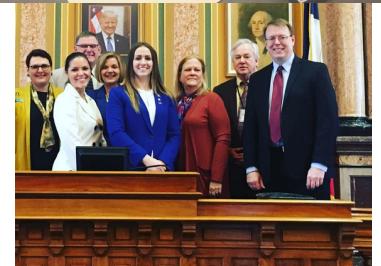
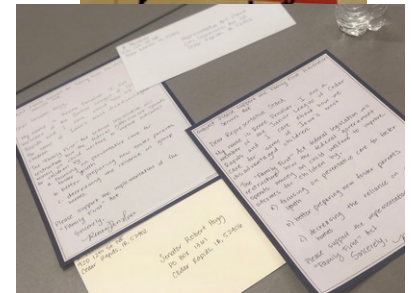
meals to AMP youth.

BRIDGING THE G.A.P.

ADVOCATE

The Project Advocate initiative focuses on supporting youth in foster care from a policy and advocacy standpoint. As we continue to learn more about the issues and barriers facing youth in / aging out of the foster care system, we are able to better speak to their needs. Our goal is to advocate for them to receive fair care, access to resources, and more. Advocacy efforts include hosting speakers and events, and sharing resources with local partners to continue to learn more about the current environment, and what the youth we serve might be facing.

Annually, JLCR travels to the Iowa state capitol to speak with lawmakers on the challenges youth in foster care face. We also held letter-writing campaigns to local legislation, highlighted Foster Care/Adoption success stories with our Gallery of Strength campaign, and continue to highlight statistics and information on foster care in our social media campaigns. Ongoing pandemic challenges limited in-person opportunities for advocacy this year, but we are hoping to ramp up again in the future.



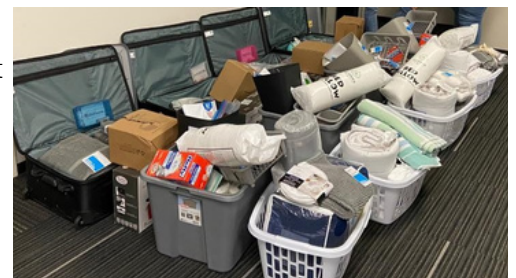
Note: Photos taken pre-2021

PROVIDE

The Project Provide initiative focuses on providing both funds and physical items youth need as they start to establish their independence. Apartment basics, housing deposits, books and school supplies for education, and more. These are often items that young adults get from their support network and can be expensive to purchase all at once. Many youth aging out of care lack this support and starting out on their own can be extremely challenging.

APARTMENT IN A SUITCASE

JLCR has pioneered the "Apartment in a Suitcase". Providing each teen aging out with a suitcase full of necessary basics needed for independent living. The "suitcase" has now expanded to include a plastic tub and laundry basket of items. "Suitcases" are provided at no cost to young adults aging out of foster care and include everything from cleaning supplies to bedsheets to pots and pans.



JLCR has also started providing baby packs for new parents as well as refresher packs to replenish some of the items in the suitcases once they are used.

HOUSING FIRST PROJECT

Since 2018, the JLCR Housing First Project has provided 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, JLCR pays 100 percent of participant rent to start, reducing the financial support by one-third at six and nine months. During this time, 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 full year of assisted housing through JLCR and hopefully have their own emergency fund started.



JLCR SCHOLARSHIP FUND

We know that young adults often incur unplanned expenses - from car repairs to housing deposits to books for school. These expenses can easily derail their tight budgets. Without a safety net of friends & family or financial knowledge to fall back on, youth who have aged out of foster care can quickly face homelessness and other risks. The JLCR Scholarship Fund offers needs-based scholarships for these various expenses. More than \$9,100 in scholarships were granted this fiscal year to youth in Cedar Rapids and surrounding communities.



MEMBERSHIP TRAINING

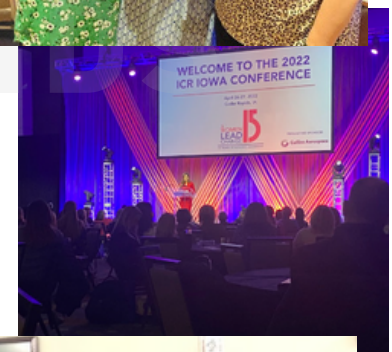
One of the pillars of JLCR is the opportunity to diversify members' professional and community experience through various high-quality and meaningful training workshops and conferences.

JLCR provides financial support to help members attend local and national trainings that may otherwise be unattainable. Despite the Covid challenges this year, JLCR provided training to members in a variety of ways.

- Virtual "Lunch and Learns" were hosted monthly covering a wide range of topics like How to Project Manage Your Life, Financial Wellness, and Telling Your Story Through Your Resume.
- A variety of Cedar Rapids community training opportunities such as Pure Barre Yoga sessions, Women Lead Change, and the United Way of East Central Iowa BOLD program.
- JLCR Sustainer Talks - Past active members attended membership meetings to talk about past projects and the history of JLCR and some of the challenges they tackled in past years.
- National Association of Junior League (AJLI) fall and spring conferences.

JLCR has also expressed our firm commitment to the ongoing pursuit of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB). Discussions and socials are held each month to discuss many issues related to this important initiative. Just a few of the topics/training included:

- The importance of pronouns
- Understanding racial bias
- Disability awareness
- Gender equity
- MLK & civil rights



FUNDRAISING

VIRTUAL 5K RUN

This new event was a great way to raise JLCR awareness and some funds during COVID. JLCR held this week long social media based event October 24th-31st. Participants could run/walk on their own time either alone or in a group. While small, JLCR was excited to raise \$890 dollars.



STUFF THE TRUCK

Stuff the Truck was another fundraiser held this year by JLCR on Giving Tuesday (November 30th). Partnering with Foundation 2, JLCR secured a truck rental donation and then used it to literally stuff with community donations. Items requested help fill JLCR suitcases for the youth aging out of care. Our members staffed the truck parked at Craft'd in downtown Cedar Rapids. The visibility of the truck (and the event itself) helped bring awareness to JLCR and its project as well as raising many in-kind and monetary donations. Dish sponges, toilet paper, bed sheets, and even trash bags were donated. Plus, to help increase their impact, both JLCR and Foundation 2 had matching sponsor donations from Van Meter and CellSite. At the end of the day, the event had raised \$9,878 worth of monetary and in-kind donations.



FOSTERING STRENGTH

After a 2 year hiatus, JLCR was extremely excited to once again host our annual fundraiser/advocacy luncheon Fostering Strength on May 19th. The annual luncheon brings together hundreds of Cedar Rapids-area community partners, foster care and adoption professionals, JLCR donors, members, and more for an afternoon of impactful stories of hope and perseverance through difficult times.

This year JLCR was honored to welcome Grammy-nominated jazz artist and foster care alumni and advocate, Janiva Magness, to share her journey through domestic abuse, foster care, addiction and the saving grace of music.

A total of 230 tickets were sold and over \$32,000 raised this year and plans are already in the works for 2023.



JLCR LEADERSHIP TEAM

JLCR Board of Directors

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 (left to right):

Kelsey Veldhuizen, Executive VP Management,
Katie Curtis, President, Erin Brown, Nominating Chair.

Bottom Row (left to right):

Rachel Rigdon, President-Elect, Carrie Kellogg, Treasurer.
Not pictured: Cara Joens, Secretary



JLCR Management Team

Chosen each year through an application and interview process, their charge is to ensure all parts of the JLCR annual plan are executed including community awareness, fundraising and membership recruitment, development & retention.

Top Row (left to right):

Kayla Gomez Calderon, VP Operations, Jessica Murry, VP Communications, Jessica Van Erdewyk, VP Fund Development

Bottom Row (left to right):

Kelsey Veldhuizen, Executive VP Management, Delaney Dehnke, At-Large Member, Allison Witters, VP Membership, Amanda Zhorne, VP Community.

Not Pictured: Elyse Garlock, Executive VP Management Assistant

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

Junior League of Cedar Rapids is able to impact our community with the generous support of sponsors and community partners. Thank you to those that have supported us this past year!



STANDING OVATION AWARDS

In May 2022, JLCR hosted its annual meeting to close the 2021-22 Junior League year and celebrate the year's accomplishments. The following members and community partners received awards thanks to their great impact on JLCR in the last year.

Unsung Hero Award - Kayla Gomez Calderon

Kayla has had to pick up a lot this year between the office manager transition and moving to a new version of Quickbooks. No one knows how many hours she put in, all without complaint!

Spirit Award - Danielle Monthei

For jumping right in to help plan and implement the Stuff the Truck event. She embodies the servant leadership qualities that make her an asset to the league.

Wheels in Motion Award - Lauren White

Lauren kept AMP running smoothly through another year of periodic changes in format due to COVID. She also was a great support to members that needed help getting AMP hours figured out in DC. She definitely kept the wheels going all League year!

Leadership Award - Elyse Garlock

Elyse showed up in many spaces and filled many gaps, as true leaders do! She supported many Councils, office operations, and League members in general. She consistently asked, "Where can I help?" and the offer was sincere. We're so lucky to have her!

Rising Star Award - Ashley Burns

Ashley joined JLCR motivated to make a difference and quickly found a way to do just that. She asked good questions, found areas that could use support, and took the initiative to make things happen. No doubt she's going to continue to make JLCR better in expected and unexpected ways!

Honorary Members Award - Brittley Dixon

As our new Office Manager, Brittley was thrown in mid-year and has been fantastic ever since! She listens to all of our needs with an "I'll figure it out and get back to you" attitude. We are so appreciative of her efforts!

Sustainer of the Year Award - Erica Bergfeld-Reed

Erica was so helpful in mentoring this year and played a big part in our UFG sponsorship. We appreciate everything she continues to do to support our league and its members. She goes above and beyond as a sustainer and we are so fortunate to have her.



Top Row (left to right): Lauren White, Ashley Burns, Kayla Gomez Calderon, Kelsey Veldhuizen, Brittley Dixon, Jena Schoenhofer, Felisha Junge
Bottom Row (left to right): Leslie Neugebauer, Katie Curtis, Heidi Goetsch, Karen Swanson, Danielle Monthei. **Not pictured:** Erica Bergfeld-Reed and Elyse Garlock

Robert O. Daniel Community Service Award - GreenState Credit Union

GreenState has been a strong financial supporter of JLCR for many years. We are so grateful for their continued sponsorship. We would especially like to thank Felisha Junge. Felisha is an amazing sustainer and we are so lucky to have her and GreenState on our team!

Communications Key Master - Jena Schoenhofer

Jena has been a key member of the Communications team this year. She steps up to the plate often and knows how to take an idea and run with it. She was the master behind the Fostering Strength promotional pieces and can write advocacy Facebook posts in her sleep.

Kris Kross Award - Leslie Neugebauer

Even though Leslie purposefully passed on taking on a chair role this year because she knew her life was too busy, she did not disengage one bit! Leslie was quick to JUMP in and help her Council in any way possible and consistently found ways to support our League mission! he was a quiet force in the background this League year, making a HUGE impact!"

Feel the Burn - Karen Swanson

Karen continually champions, supports, and advocates for Junior League members - active and sustaining. She is such a bright light to many in Junior League and in the community, and we feel so blessed to have her continued engagement.

Dynamic Duo - Katie Curtis & Kelsey Veldhuizen

They always come to the rescue when needed. I can think of several different scenarios where they rolled their sleeves up and did the work even when it wasn't their expertise. They knew the work had to be done and did it!!



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS

Cash	\$142,369
Accounts Receivable	\$2,192
Certificate of Deposit	\$28,624
Other Assets	\$500

FIXED ASSETS

Endowment	\$254,320
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TOTAL ASSETS \$428,005

TOTAL LIABILITIES

\$18,731

Net Assets

Unrestricted

\$409,274

TOTAL NET ASSETS

\$409,274

TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS \$428,005

LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$1,794
Deferred Revenue (Dues)	\$16,936

TOTAL LIABILITIES \$18,731



We are the JUNIOR LEAGUE OF CEDAR RAPIDS





JUNIOR LEAGUE OF
CEDAR RAPIDS

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