

the official magazine of the

3039M

Junior League of Washington



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Be BOLD

BUILDING OUR LEAGUE DAILY

2022-2023 WHAT'S INSIDE

Revisiting Our
Commitment to Diversity

You Too Can Lead
in the League

Crowning Achievement:
How Miss DC Brings League
Lessons Center Stage

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Cheers to the 110th year of the Junior League of Washington (JLW)! It was an exciting year for JLW, who at our core, are a steadfast group of women committed to doing good in our communities, while building on the opportunity we have in front of us to grow as leaders, volunteers, parents, sisters, friends, and family.

This year, when I introduced our theme - ***Be BOLD: Building Our League Daily***. I challenged each member to ***Be BOLD*** in our thoughts, words, and actions, and I'm proud to say JLW has accomplished that and more.

This year, we took challenges and made them opportunities, we did big things, small things, and everything in between. Through it all we challenged ourselves to come back to the heart of who we are - a mission driven, woman-powered organization, that seeks to ***advance women's leadership for meaningful community impact through volunteer action, collaboration, and training***. Which incidentally, is our newly adopted mission that allows us to better articulate the work we do, the impact we make, and the community we hope to foster.

For our first in-person year since the 2018-2019 League year, our members were back in full force volunteering in the community. From this year's National Book Festival and community partner events to our jam-packed fundraisers, in-League trainings, and leadership opportunities - JLW continues to thrive!

I hope as you read through the magazine, you'll enjoy the articles featuring our DEIAB work, the heartwarming stories from our work with the National Rehabilitation Hospital, how Tossed & found went green this year, and so much more!

This edition of *3039M* is a celebratory snapshot of what we've done this year, but it is by no means everything. Our impact is just far too big. As JLW members, we are force multipliers in our community. It is what has brought us to 110 years of service and support. Without each of the 2,300+ members who call JLW home, we would not have a story to tell, and for that I'm so grateful to each of you.

As I said last year, "when we build a legacy, we do not see the fruits of our labor, or the shade of the trees we plant, but we can be confident in knowing that by doing the simplest of things, we provide a foundation that will bring others to our table in perpetuity."

You have helped provide that foundation for new ideas to grow, for women to lead, and for us to make a difference in the lives of so many. It has been my honor to serve as JLW President this year and I'll forever be grateful for the opportunity to support and cheer each of you on.

On behalf of the 2022-2023 Board of Directors, our staff, leaders, and every member, thank you for continued service, commitment, and membership in the Junior League of Washington. Thank you for adopting ***Be BOLD*** as your JLW mantra and finding your JLW joy this year. Cheers to the next 110 years of service!

Katherine Rodriguez

2022-2023 JLV President

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



The theme for JLW’s 110th year was **Be BOLD: Building Our League Daily**. Returning to our first fully in-person League Year since the pandemic began, I am confident that as you thumb through the pages of the now longer and more in-depth *3039M*, you’ll notice a rich tapestry of stories from many committees that you may not have heard from in some time. While I always eagerly look forward to the magazine’s release, this year I am especially proud to have been a part of its creation as Chair of the Publications Committee.

This is my sixth year serving on this committee. What draws me in and keeps me coming back is not simply seeing my name on a byline or having flexibility to craft a story as I see fit, it’s the chance to tell the story of countless women who volunteer their free time and expertise and the lasting effect that has on our community.

Over the course of my involvement with the publication, I have had the opportunity to interview so many interesting people who I would not otherwise have crossed paths with in the League. Women who have had vastly different career paths or life experiences, but were gracious enough to speak with me and trust me to tell their story because of our shared membership in this organization. It was a feeling of community and connectedness that I never wanted to take for granted.

Thus, as we considered the theme and what it means to **Be BOLD**, it became clear that it’s because of every single one of you laying your individual

bricks (metaphorical though they may be) that we are able to build our League daily.

Those who wake up early on Saturday mornings for tutoring.

Those who put on a smile and welcome a potential new member into Loughborough House.

Those who spend hours guiding tours on their days off.

Those who volunteer bravely for leadership positions.

This magazine is dedicated to all of you bold, interesting women who volunteer your time and efforts to make this organization thrive.

And for those of you who, throughout the pandemic, may have wondered whether JLW was the place for you, I would encourage you to read how you can become involved in leadership as well as our continued commitment to diversity. Because building the League of tomorrow requires the brave actions of women acting today.

Yours in service,
Katelin Hatfield
Editor

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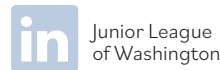
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Cover image courtesy of Emily Jagdmann.

Members are encouraged to tag the League's accounts when posting photos from JLW events. As with all social media sharing, please use #JLWvol as the main hashtag.



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IN MEMORIAM

*“Gone but not forgotten, gone but ever here.
No longer living in this world, but always and ever near.”*



Elizabeth Keys

*JLW Past President
12/17/1975 - 11/17/2022*



Catherine "Tina" Cleland

*JLW Past President
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FROM BINGO TO WHEELCHAIR YOGA

JLW Volunteers Return at Last to the National Rehabilitation Hospital

Laura Blanton



Former NRH chair, Stephanie Hoehn, leads wheelchair yoga with patients.

After a nearly three-year hiatus due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Junior League of Washington (JLW) volunteers returned with great fanfare to the MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH) in December 2022, bringing renewed energy and a fresh lineup of fun and

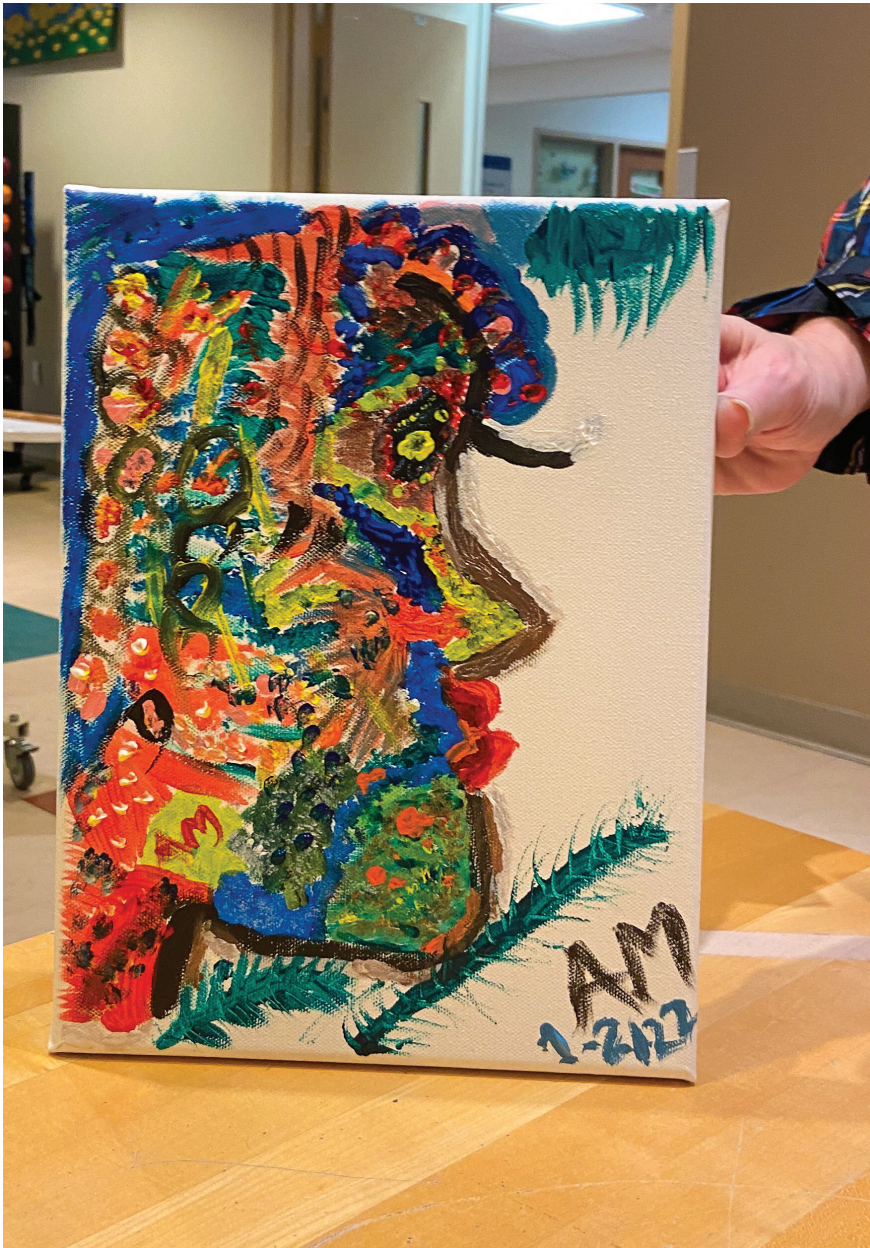
therapeutic activities to help patients along their path to recovery.

Spanning more than three decades, this volunteer partnership has evolved since its inception, based on volunteer feedback, patients' interests, and JLW members' expertise. Beyond weekly bingo games – a perennial favorite – JLW members now organize exciting new

events including karaoke, wheelchair yoga, card making, painting, vision board training, and a Super Bowl gathering.

Despite all of these new changes, what has remained steadfast over the years is JLW's dedication to serving the inspiring patients at NRH. A nationally ranked hospital, NRH is the largest acute rehabilitation facility in the region and treats

“Following our canvas painting activity, one of the patients, beaming, told us our visit had been her happiest moment since she had entered the hospital, specifically stating, ‘All of my vitals are elevated to happy,’” shared Kronthal.



A participant shows off their newly completed artwork. Canvas painting is a new activity that was added to the repertoire in 2022-2023.

complex cases, such as brain and spinal cord injuries, often the result of a serious accident or illness.

In addition to top-notch medical care, what patients need throughout their rehabilitation journey is emotional support and a sense of hope, says Jennie Kronthal, Chair of JLV's National Rehabilitation Hospital Committee.

“They are navigating recovery from a circumstance that was never imagined. Some are learning to walk again. Others are learning how to cope in light of new physical limitations,” Kronthal explains.

In keeping with NRH's founding credo, Adding Life to Years, JLV volunteers have gone to great lengths to show support and brighten each patient's day. Unforgettable patient interactions are the hallmark of JLV's service at NRH. In fact, most volunteers use words like incredible, meaningful, uplifting, and powerful to describe these exchanges and their overall experience at NRH.

Another important part of JLV's work at NRH is the reading material distribution program reinvigorated by 2021-2022 NRH Committee Chair, Stephanie Hoehn. Hoehn secured funding from JLV for a book cart and materials to stock it. Items on the cart now range from the latest issue of *People* magazine to classic novels by F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway. To date, volunteers have distributed nearly 500 books and magazines to patients, including over 150 items donated by JLV members at the Winter General Membership Meeting in January.

The power of the book cart is its ability to spark unexpectedly meaningful conversations. Kronthal says patients are “so immensely grateful to receive books (and be visited by us) that merely coming through and providing reading materials results in special experiences.” Many patients candidly share stories about their recovery journeys, which are both “deeply personal” and “extremely touching” in Kronthal's experience.

To further expand the offer of new activities for 2023, the NRH Committee tapped into the expertise of JMW's Community Training Committee. Vice Chair Dina Moussa visited the hospital earlier this year to facilitate a training on how to create a vision board. Patients used beautiful images, quotations, and vibrant colors to craft collages representing their goals and dreams for the future. These inspiring boards reflect the positive outlook many patients strive for during their recovery.

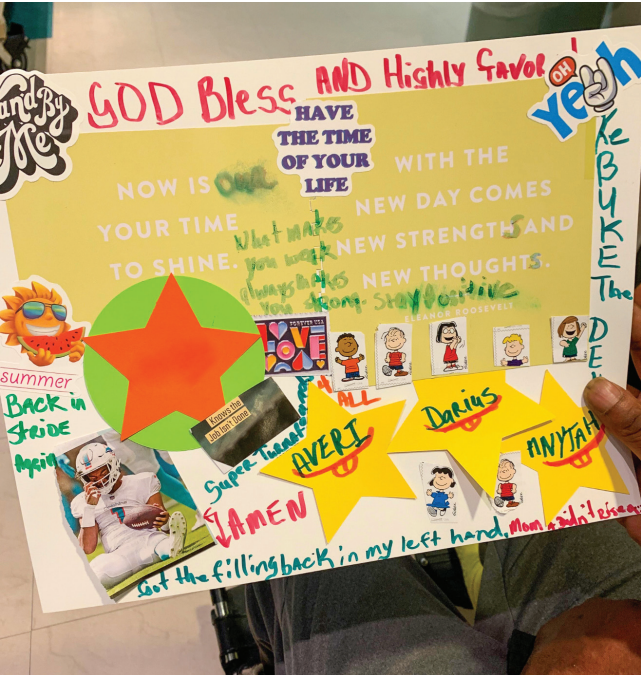
Within just a few months of returning to NRH, JMW has completely revamped its programming for the hospital, receiving rave reviews from patients. Volunteers are thrilled to be back in action and are looking forward to continuing their service for many years to come. •

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

An excellent way to contribute to NRH is by donating to the book cart. JMW members, as well as members of the DC community, can drop off donations at JMW headquarters (3039 M Street NW). In addition to books and magazines, patients have also enjoyed adult coloring books and therapeutic puzzle books, as well as works in other languages. Materials containing positive, uplifting content are highly encouraged and appreciated.



2022-2023 NRH chair (Jennie Kronthal, right) and 2021-2022 chair (Stephanie Hoehn, left) with the ever popular book cart.



A patient displays his Vision Board following the training led by JMW Community Training Committee Vice Chair, Dina Moussa.



Patients tap into their goals and dreams by creating Vision Boards.

ARTIST ANNA WEATHERLEY OPENS STUDIO TO JLW MEMBERS FOR PRIVATE TOURS

Sarah Valerio O'Connell



The hand-painted porcelain of Anna Weatherley is immediately distinguishable for its unique patterns and high quality. Her art has been displayed at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, the White House, the Decatur House, and Buckingham Palace. Weatherley has been featured in magazines from *Vanity Fair* to *Architectural Digest*, *Modern Bride*, and *Town & Country*. And on September 21 and October 25, 2022, Anna Weatherley opened the doors of her studio in Arlington to members of the Junior League of Washington (JLW) for an exclusive private tour and talk.

Nearly 20 JLW members attended the events, which were organized by the Esprit Committee and hosted by committee member Kenya Payton.



Opposite page: JLW members pose with Anna Weatherley (second from left) in her studio. Top photo: A hand-painted porcelain plate created by Anna Weatherley. At left: A Weatherley place setting.



“I recently came across one of her plate collections during a visit to New York, and as I was researching her other collections, I saw that her studio was located in Arlington and that she gave tea party tours!” explained Payton excitedly.

She reached out to Weatherley, whom Payton said was excited to have JLW be her first tour since the COVID-19 pandemic started.

“Unfortunately, she was unable to host us for tea due to a mask mandate, but she gave us a personal tour of her studio that contained her porcelain dining sets as well as art and her new jewelry collection,” Payton said.

Members toured the first and second floors containing Weatherley’s porcelain dining sets made up of her My Flowers and Butterfly collections. On the third floor, members viewed her handmade jewelry created from different crystals, stones, and turquoise.

“Aside from the walls of the showroom being lined from floor to ceiling with hand painted dishes, there were many other beautiful parts to see. We saw a gorgeous floral and bird motif she had painted on tiles around the fireplace which was unforgettable. She had many tablescapes set through the house which were inspiring and styled perfectly,” said JLW member Angelica Spanos, a collector and longtime admirer of Weatherley’s work.

“I have loved her dishes for a while, and come from a lineage of women who collect and use fine china very frequently. I knew I had to meet Anna Weatherley for that reason alone,” Spanos explained.

Spanos added that her mom inspired her love of Weatherley’s dishes, and that she registered for and acquired some pieces for her wedding.

“Meeting Mrs. Anna Weatherley was absolutely the highlight of the evening. She is so warm, personable, and obviously talented. It was a lovely visit, and she is a true host. I look forward to going back and am happy I was able to purchase something while there. A great memento,” said Spanos.

“I loved the Anna Weatherley event. It was so interesting to meet Ms. Weatherley and learn about the design process and effort that goes into all of the beautiful pieces,” said JLW member Jennifer Spanos, who also attended the tour.

“I also enjoyed when she opened up about her history designing dresses,” Spanos continued, noting she especially enjoyed when Weatherley during the October tour brought down several chiffon dresses she had designed years ago that had been in storage.

“I think we successfully convinced her to put them on display, so we may be back for a visit for that!” added Payton.

Weatherley has been producing hand-painted porcelain for over 26 years and has designed original pieces for heads of state, United States government officials, and royalty.

Payton adds that not only was the event an opportunity for the JLW attendees to add a new china piece to their collection but “to make a new partner for JLW” within the community. •

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GOING GREEN AND GIVING BACK WITH TOSSED & FOUND

LeaAnn Kutz

On March 24-26, 2023, the Junior League of Washington (JLW) held the 31st annual Tossed & Found sale in Arlington, Virginia.

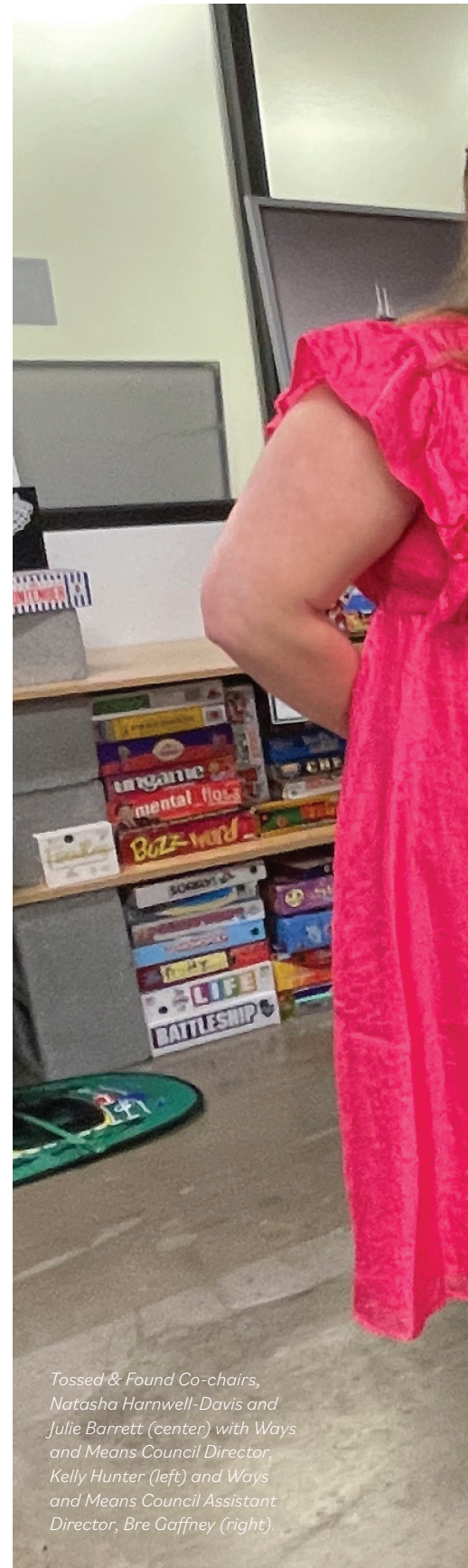
Since the inaugural JLW Tossed & Found rummage sale in 1993, this event has welcomed more than 85,000 shoppers and has provided high-quality, gently used merchandise for a bargain to DC-area attendees and community groups. Proceeds from the sale help to advance the League's mission of improving the community by funding initiatives such as our grant program, providing volunteer support for more than 20 community organizations, and supporting leadership development for our over 2,200 members. Throughout its 30-year history, the Tossed & Found sale has raised more than \$2.65 million, supported hundreds of community members, and found new homes for thousands of items.

With each coming year, the Tossed & Found Committee continues to innovate – providing an event that is as entertaining as it is beneficial to the community. This year, the Community Partner and Green Initiatives programs were a large focus in an effort to try and combat the waste often created from fast fashion, among other things.

When all was said and done and the last shopper had checked out, the Tossed & Found Committee:

- Recycled approximately **1,200 pounds** of fabric that would have otherwise gone into landfills
- Donated nearly **300 boxes** of clothing, shoes, linens, and other items to local nonprofits and community partners
- Raised **more than \$11,200 to support our Community Cash Card program**, through which we offer vouchers to DC-area individuals in need to shop the sale for essential everyday items
- Pledged **more than 230 Community Cash Cards** to local individuals and nonprofit organizations
- Held a **record-breaking Children's Trunk Show** prior to the sale weekend with more than \$12,000 in revenue

For the first time, community partners were invited to speak at *A Quality Occasion* – the kickoff celebration for the sale weekend – about their organizations' missions and their relationships with JLW. Featured guest speakers were Wanda Steptoe, Executive Director of New Endeavors by Women (NEW) and Stacia Frederick, Director of Volunteers and Community Engagement at Calvary Women's Services. Both organizations utilize JLW volunteers and participate in the Tossed & Found Community Cash Card program.



Tossed & Found Co-chairs, Natasha Harnwell-Davis and Julie Barrett (center) with Ways and Means Council Director, Kelly Hunter (left) and Ways and Means Council Assistant Director, Bre Gaffney (right).





Stacia Frederick, Director of Volunteers and Community Engagement for one of JLW's Community Partners, Calvary Women's Services, addresses the crowd at A Quality Occasion.

“The items that the women at Calvary purchase with the Community Cash Cards help them to rebuild their lives, and we are so thankful for that,” expounded Frederick.

“A client shared with me today that the event meant a lot to her because she is on a fixed income and doesn’t have the money to easily purchase household goods. We would not be able to meet our mission without the generosity of community partners like the Junior League of Washington. You are truly a beautiful example of women helping women.”

Step toe shared similar sentiments: “We at New Endeavors by Women appreciate the long-standing relationship we have had with Junior League of Washington. Their Tossed & Found event is one of the many ways they have supported the women we serve who are striving to move out of homelessness,” said Step toe sharing similar sentiments to Frederick.

“Tossed & Found provides an opportunity for them to choose essential items such as pots and pans, linen, and dishes to transform their new space into a home they are proud of. They can also shop for clothing for interviews and work, helping each woman feel confident as she achieves her goals.”

This sale would not have been possible without the League’s generous donors providing monetary support, time, and event space, as well as our tireless volunteers, who dedicated more than 4,000 hours to make the event happen.

“Tossed & Found is truly a team effort,” said Julie Barrett, Tossed & Found Committee Co-Chair. “Natasha [Harnwell-Davis, Tossed & Found Committee Co-Chair] and I are so grateful for our amazing steering members who consistently impressed us with their resourcefulness and dedication, and who ensured this year’s fundraiser was such a success.” •

TIFFANI MOORE'S INSIGHT AND INTENTION MOVES THE JLW FUND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FORWARD

Emily Jagdmann

When you first talk with Tiffani Moore, you can feel the excitement, passion, and energy radiating from her. There is a confidence in her belief that the work of the Junior League of Washington (JLW) is important, and that she makes a tangible difference in her capacity as the Ways & Means Council Chief of Staff. But how does she achieve this?

The Ways & Means Council consists of several committees known for hosting some of the largest fundraising events of the League year including Kitchen Tour's Floral Fête, Marketplace, Tossed & Found, Women's Leadership Breakfast, and Friends of the Junior League Committees.

Within her role as Chief of Staff, Moore ensures that all committees within the council and fundraisers serve the overarching goals of the JLW, that they do not compete with each other for funds, and that they focus on serving the League's mission. Moore supports members and committees as they break down silos and ensures all volunteers approach philanthropy and voluntarism collaboratively.

Sometimes it can be hard to see the forest for the trees, and Moore provides that holistic perspective to help committees and individuals maintain their focus on the larger purpose of the JLW. As Moore says, "it is always important to remember the 'Why.'"



Tiffani Moore
Ways & Means Council Chief of Staff

Moore's passion for the League is infectious. She is proud of the bi-annual Fund Development Communication that was being shared with donors this past League year. This content is not a direct ask for donors, and instead shares all the great things that the League is achieving with past donations. It is a great way to connect with donors without making a hard ask, as well as to transform donors into advocates for the work of the JLW.

Moore's focus on creating and developing relationships to advance the Fund Development Plan is also reflected in the trainings she has provided both to Board and League members to better

empower them to make the ask - to give them the tools to share why the work of JLW is so important and why any individual should support the JLW's efforts.

In everything that she does, Moore is humble, thoughtful, and mindful of the greater importance and implications of her efforts on behalf of the Ways & Means Council. She discusses the intentional sunsetting of donor perks as a reflection of the shift in thinking to emphasize the act of giving as the actual reward. This is just a small example of how Moore is laser focused on ensuring that everything the League is doing helps to cultivate this perspective - this culture of philanthropy - where the act of giving is what is valued most by the organization.

Now, Moore's focus is on ensuring that new chairs and leaders are solution-oriented, thoughtful, and able to reflect to see the big picture, and how their role fits within and advances that larger vision. Her goal is to ensure that JLW continues the progress it has made to focus on relationships, not transactions. Moore sees the need for the JLW Fund Development Plan to continue to evolve to best leverage future opportunities, and envisions future experimentation and collaboration that will continue to break down silos and build relationships both internally and externally to advance the mission of the JLW for many years to come. •

LEADING FROM WITHIN

How Virgin Galactic VP helped WLB attendees Shoot for the Stars!

Hannah Stubbs



Attendees listen intently to Katherine Rodriguez, J.L.W.'s current president.

Those who attended the Women's Leadership Breakfast (WLB) this autumn came away from the jam-packed morning with a better sense of how to "Lead from Within." The Breakfast, one of the Junior League of Washington (JLW)'s most beloved events, was hosted at the National Press Club, and boasted record-breaking attendance this year. Over 200 attendees, members and non-members alike, came to the sold-out fundraising event, the proceeds of which will further JLW's focus on creating pathways to opportunity.

"There is tremendous power in creating a diverse space for women

to commune and grow with each other," noted Sara McGanity, Women's Leadership Breakfast Committee Co-Chair, who helped plan the event with fellow Co-Chair, Gaybrielle Gant. The event provided a platform for a diverse group of speakers – both inside and outside of the JLW community – to speak about ways in which they are leaders within their communities.

Breakfast-goers also had the opportunity to learn more about the many leadership development programs available to JLW members, such as *Get on Board*, which provides trainees with the skills needed to serve successfully on nonprofit boards. Those who completed

the *Get on Board* program in 2022 were recognized at the Breakfast along with awardees of various League honors and targeted grants.

The Breakfast remains a valuable resource for those looking to become a more effective leader in work and life, increase their sphere of influence, and it also showcases the ways in which JLW members can utilize the League's assets throughout the year for their benefit and for the benefit of others.

BRINGING TOGETHER ALL WOMEN LEADERS

Since the inaugural Women's Leadership Breakfast in 2018, JLW has held the

fundraiser annually, including a virtual edition in 2021 during the pandemic.

“The Breakfast is intended to celebrate women as business leaders, entrepreneurs, and community advocates; inspire and support the next generation of women in and outside of the League; and promote JLW’s mission of advancing women’s leadership for meaningful community impact through volunteer action, collaboration, and training,” explained Natalie Rance, Communications Vice Chair.

Unlike other events that are primarily centered on JLW members, the WLB is open to the public and over the years has seen friends, family, and co-workers of League members in attendance. The Breakfast, according to Rance, has become a place for “women of all ages and all stages of [their] career to learn, grow, and practice fellowship.”

CREATING A DYNAMIC EVENT

Past themes of the Breakfast included *Personalizing Your Leadership Style* and *Lead Confidently*. When choosing the theme, *Leading from Within*, for this year’s event, Rance emphasized that she and the co-chairs “wanted to create an inclusive environment for all women in the League and beyond to hear from a dynamic group of business leaders,

entrepreneurs, and community advocates who are *leading from within* as they spoke about the life of women in leadership – their challenges, successes, and advice for others.”

As for how the speakers were chosen, McGanity and Rance explained that the committee “selected speakers who embodied this year’s ‘Leading from Within’ theme.”

“We collected speaker recommendations from past Breakfast leaders, discussed our vision for the program with current League leadership, and worked with our committee to successfully create a tiered list for keynotes, panelists, and moderators,” detailed Gant. “From there we implemented an outreach plan which helped us to secure our speakers for the program this year that aligned with our vision for the diversity of the program in not only ethnicities but also in experience, leadership skills as well as age and education.”

The keynote speaker especially exemplified this criteria. In Sirisha Bandla, the Vice President of Government Affairs and Research Operations for Virgin Galactic, they found a leader who is making her mark in the aerospace industry while working to pave the way for other women to do the same.

“Sirisha felt like a burst of innovation and fresh energy all at once,” Gant said warmly. Bandla has an impressive resume spanning the fields of aeronautical engineering, business, and government affairs, but that wasn’t the only thing that piqued the interest of the committee.

“Not only has she achieved things many of us can only imagine, but she is also representing women and people of color – giving hope to others to follow in her footsteps,” Rance gushed.

Throughout her remarks, Bandla expressed her long-held interest in space travel and enraptured the audience as she spoke about achieving that cosmic milestone with Virgin Galactic in 2021. Bandla imparted wisdom by encouraging attendees to “harness transformational experiences, and use them as your motivator to do more.”

Bandla shared her experience and perspective of that trip to space, told a few short stories from the journey, and described her thoughts on the potential for commercial spaceflight to alter and shift human perspectives on its role on our planet.

“I hope my story will inspire the next generation of dreamers. Sharing my story with others *is* leading from within,” the keynote proclaimed.



Lauren Bealore leads the discussion with keynote speaker, Sirisha Bandla, about her experiences in life and leadership.



Katherine Rodriguez and Kimberly Price smile with award winners Amy Javaid and Yasmine Arrington.



The leaders of the 2022 WLB Committee (from left), Daria Awash, Sara McGanity, Gaybrielle Gant, Natalie Rance, and Rachel Layher.

LIVELY PANEL DISCUSSION

The jam-packed agenda also included a panel with four inspiring leaders. Moderated by JLW's own Mikayla Bouchard Hensler, the panel included Lauren Bealore, Dr. Nardos King, and our very own JLW president, Katherine Rodriguez. Attendees had the opportunity to hear the four women share their experiences pushing boundaries and showcasing their leadership in and out of the workplace.

Between posing questions both prepared and from the audience, Mikayla Bouchard Hensler spoke about her career as a Managing Editor for CNN Politics. In her role overseeing reporters and editors, she helps to keep the public informed of Washington's core beats, including the White House, Congress, national security, the Justice Department, and the judiciary.

Hailing from a policy and advocacy background, Lauren Bealore used her expertise to become a co-founder of a women-owned non-profit, Young, Ambitious, and Beautiful (Y.A.B.), an organization which supports young women of color with their businesses and entrepreneurial ventures.

Dr. Nardos King is a powerful force within the education space and beyond. Dr. King serves as the Interim Chief

Equity Officer for Fairfax County Public Schools and the President of the National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE). Daily, she shapes the future for students throughout the country.

Katherine Rodriguez, JLW's current President, has served in many leadership capacities in the League since she joined in 2012. Outside of her day job as Head of Federal Public Engagement for DoorDash, her in-League career has included such roles as Communications & Public Relations Council Director, New Membership Council Director, and Assistant Council Director for the Ways & Means Council, to name a few.

ACKNOWLEDGING AWARD WINNERS

Other aspects of the morning's programming included the celebration of this year's JLW awards. Amy Javid won JLW's *Mary Harriman Community Award*, which recognizes an innovative volunteer in the Washington, DC community. Javid, a longtime volunteer, staff member, and leader of the nonprofit, A Wider Circle, was recently named President and CEO of the organization in July 2021.

Yasmine Arrington won JLW's *Rising Leader Award* for her work as the Founder and Executive Director of her nonprofit, ScholarCHIPS, which

provides scholarships and other resources to high school seniors with incarcerated parents.

Other acknowledgements came in the form of JLW's community assistance grants, which were highlighted before the event's conclusion. Community assistance grants are a vital piece of JLW's focus area, supporting pathways to opportunity, as their goal is to increase capacity building in our community.

"My favorite part of this year's Breakfast was sharing the real-time work that we do in the League. Amplifying the different programs, CAF Grants, community organizations we partner with, and giving seats to community partners helped show the reality of why we do what we do in JLW and the importance of a forward-facing fundraising program," said Gant.

LEAVING BEHIND A LEGACY

After moving the event from the spring to the fall to alleviate the fundraising pressure on the League, the Women's Leadership Breakfast Committee needed to be nimble to work under an accelerated timeline.

"The biggest challenge was having to flip the program in such a short time while having just hosted the program in the same calendar year," explained Gant.

This year's committee focused its efforts on increasing its non-League member ticket purchases. In order to strategically market the event to prospective new guests, the team utilized several tactics including flyers, email blasts, social media promotions, and local media pitches. Looking into the future, the committee plans to expand its reach with more community engagement as they continue to provide the best programming for guests, panelists, and honorees.

The committee's hard work paid off this year and the organizers are already looking forward to the "fun, women-empowered, 'pack-a-punch' leadership event" in the works for the fall 2023 Breakfast. •

LAW & ORDER

JUNIOR LEAGUE OF WASHINGTON

In JMW, the bylaws have been represented by two separate, yet equally important women during their time as Parliamentarians. These are their stories.

LeaAnn Kutz

A parliamentarian, by definition, is an advisor to the leaders and members of a deliberative body on the rules and procedures the group follows to carry out its business. The role of the Parliamentarian of Junior League of Washington (JLW) is just that – an adviser to the League President and Board members on the rules by which the Board operates, including the JLW Bylaws, Standing Rules and Procedures, and Robert’s Rules of Order. The

Parliamentarian is not a Board member, but attends Board meetings and supports the Board in doing its job. The goal behind Robert’s Rules is to facilitate productive discussion and ensure that all voices are heard.

This role, appointed by the JLW President, has been integral in supporting our top leaders over the years. 3039M had a chance to talk with both our current and a past Parliamentarian, Maria Marks and Maria Estefania, respectively, to hear about their experiences in this role, what

they have learned, how the organization has evolved over the years, and words of advice for their fellow ladies of JLW.

Moderator, LeaAnn Kutz (LK): How long have you had this position, and what made you want to take it on?

Maria Marks (MM): I have been the Parliamentarian since 2014. Maria and I shared the role in 2014-2015. This is one of those roles where you assist the Board and ensure that everything keeps

about our league

moving forward. I am impartial. It is a way of helping keep meetings on track within the guard rails. I took it as a way to stay involved and to be able to give back – I was fortunate to have a good Parliamentarian when I was the JLW President in 2009-2010, so this way I can give back and provide mentorship to presidents and leaders on the Board.

Maria Estefania (ME): I was the JLW Parliamentarian for nine years from 2005-2015. As a past Board member and former JLW President, I knew how important help from the Parliamentarian was to Board efficiency and effectiveness, and I knew from a legal standpoint, how important it is that JLW act in accordance with its governing documents. I had never considered being Parliamentarian myself, until I was asked by President Barbara Franklin to serve as Parliamentarian for her Board. Barbara had been a Provisional when I was President, and had become a very good friend of mine as we worked together on raising money for renovating Loughborough House. I knew she would be a wonderful president, and I wanted to help her in any way I could!

LK: What is your favorite part about the role?

MM: My favorite part is the enthusiasm of the current leaders and listening to the discussions at the table.

ME: My favorite part was getting to know the phenomenal leaders on the Board and working to assist them achieve what they wanted to do for the League.

LK: What have you learned in this role?

MM: I am continually learning. Just because we have always done something

a certain way, that doesn't mean we always have to do it that way. It doesn't mean that we must change it either. Flexibility is the biggest key and takeaway.

ME: My golly, I learned so much! The leaders of our League have always been and still are really talented women, dedicated to making good things happen for the League and determined to do what it takes to do their job well despite the many demands on them from other parts of their lives. As Parliamentarian, I got to talk to multiple generations of our leaders about what they saw as the most important challenges and opportunities for the League. I learned from their visions and life experiences and leadership skills, and I got to watch our League evolve to address the changing issues before it.

LK: Speaking of change, how long have you been in the League and from your perspective, how has JLW evolved over the years?

MM: I joined Junior League of Pittsburgh in 1989 and then transferred to JLW in winter of 1990 (became an Active in 1991), so I have been a JLW member for over 30 years. It has been great to see the evolution that has happened within JLW. We continue to be engaged in the DC community and strive to make a difference in a positive manner. It is fantastic to see a continued evolution of energy, directed at how we can make an impact. That impact is really where the change has occurred. We are partnering with different community partners and looking at other mechanisms to make a financial impact – our targeted grants program is incredible, and conversations we have with potential volunteer partners are always amazing.

And look at where we have been doing the fundraising and some of the things we have been able to do over the last few



Maria Marks

years – microgrants and our Community Assistance Fund (CAF), the Little Black Dress Initiative which will help fund the CAF program. These are areas where we are able to make a very tangible difference. We have learned how to be more flexible, especially during the last few years due to COVID, and that flexibility and agility, within the League guardrails, is great to see.

ME: I have been in the League since 1969 and in JLW since 1978. I was formerly in the Junior Leagues of Spartanburg, SC, Lynchburg, VA, and Columbia, SC. Every year since I joined JLW things have changed to ensure grants and volunteer work are focused on the greatest community needs and to provide the flexibility in membership requirements for today's women. The evolution has been amazing to watch! We are a more diverse organization today and are moving proactively to address equity and inclusion issues in JLW and in our community placements and grants. We now have social media and use it very skillfully to connect our members. Members go sustaining sooner and the Sustainer Committee now serves



Maria Estefania

younger Sustainers as well as more mature ones. We hold lotteries to select our members. And, because of my work to raise money for the 1990's renovation of Headquarters, a special joy for me are our beautiful JLW Headquarters and the facilities it offers to enable League work. The important things have not changed though: JLW's commitment to the DC community, the excellence of our training for community service, and members' love of volunteering.

LK: What roles have you had in JLW and how have they benefited you in the role of Parliamentarian?

MM: I started in a community placement as a Docent at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, and then chaired that committee, and then went on to serve on Ways and Means, Nominating, and the at-large Strategic Planning Committee, which have all helped in this role. It has given me an understanding of what we need and when we need it, and not to change just to change, but change when we need to. Another thing that the League has given me, through the Board and other roles, is the understanding of Robert's Rules

[of Order]. This has helped me in my professional career. Currently, I work as a Manager of Industry Relations and part of that role is writing building codes, and we too follow Robert's Rules, so I am living in this world on a daily basis.

ME: I have been the Training and Development Committee Chair, Nominating Committee member and Chair, Future Planning Chair, Secretary, Vice President, President, Headquarters Renovation Committee Chair, and Parliamentarian.

Knowing how the League committees and Board work in-depthly and having worked with the Association of Junior Leagues International (AJLI) as JLW President was absolutely invaluable in allowing me to function well as Parliamentarian. How could I help Board members figure out how to implement their ideas consistent with JLW rules, or make changes when the rules needed changing, if I did not understand the rules myself?

LK: What piece of advice would you give to your fellow members of JLW?

MM: Ask questions, listen, try something new – and have fun!

ME: Stick with it – it is worth it! And stick with it as a Sustainer, even if all you do is pay dues to support the work of Actives. You learn so much and meet so many wonderful people. I almost resigned from JLW the year after I transferred in because it was so big. I made myself get involved and signed up for the Facilitator Course, a 91-hour Development & Training course in leadership and management. My best friends to this day are women I met in that course and the skills I learned in that course, and in later JLW leadership roles, were the basis of my later success in corporate America.

Additionally, my life and my family's lives were enriched by what I learned about the DC area and its needs from hands-on volunteering. My son, who is grown now and living in Miami, told me several years ago that he was donating part of his time as a practicing therapist to help those in Miami who needed help but could not pay because he wanted to make a difference for others like he saw me and his Dad working to do as he was growing up. I still get teary thinking about it. Every long-time JLW member has a similar story whether they realize it or not – the power of example is strong, and lasting. •

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MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

The Process of Redesigning a JLW Logo

Joanna Persio

Cassidy Herrold wears many hats as a leader on the Communications & PR Council. Not only is she an Assistant Council Director, she has served as the Junior League of Washington's (JLW) Graphic Design Chair for the past two years. Through this Committee of One, Herrold has supported a variety of graphic design needs across various committees within the League, strengthening our brand consistency and amplifying JLW images. Herrold loves her role, which taps into her creative side and credits it with giving her exposure to many aspects of our JLW community and initiatives. Her efforts to help refresh logos used across the League, generating memorable evergreen reminders of who we are and the work we do, are one example of the tremendous resources Herrold and the Graphic Design Chair position offer League committees.

Recently, Herrold worked with our Innovation and Incubation Committee to rethink the event logo used to promote the Little Black Dress Initiative (LBDI). Working together, Herrold and the committee identified key goals for the redesign: creating an image that cohesively paired our League identity and LBDI's programming, introducing elements of the graphics used across the League to the logo, and maximizing the legibility of the logo to ensure its message was clearly communicated.

To bring this vision to life, the original logo was reworked to combine the image of a little black dress with a depiction of our nation's Capitol Building – echoing the Capitol's symbolism of JLW's primary logo while

highlighting LBDI's signature element. Herrold also updated the logo to match other typefaces used across the League – part of a broader effort to streamline our fonts to create League-wide visual consistency – and worked to increase the type size as much as possible to ensure the new logo was legible and accessible. The new logo went live in the 2021-2022 League year.

Innovation and Incubation Committee member Michele Webster, who was leading LBDI at the time, worked with Herrold on the logo redesign. Michele was inspired to seek out Herrold's assistance while researching how Leagues in other cities promoted their own LBDIs. Drawing inspiration from the Liberty Bell featured prominently in the logo used by the Junior League of Philadelphia, Michele realized the Capitol dome and dress imagery could naturally be incorporated to create a LBDI logo unique to our League, which was the starting point for the redesign.

"As a League we use logos to help differentiate between our various initiatives and to help build community trust [and] brand value by using consistent visuals and messaging for [our] events," explained Herrold.

Herrold encourages JLW committees or members to think about how adding or improving a logo for their initiatives can communicate the message behind our work and create a visual reminder and memorable image in the minds of our community. She reminds us that members and committees who are looking for graphic design support – related to logo design or otherwise – can reach out to the Graphic Design Chair for help throughout the League year. •



The new logo brings together our JLW Capitol imagery with the symbolic Little Black Dress.



Pictured above is the prior LBDI logo before revamping by Cassidy and the Innovation and Incubation Committee.

GET ON BOARD

*JLW Members Trained in New Leadership Skills
to Deepen their Community Engagement*

Maggie Jo Buchanan

The Get on Board (GOB) training program represents two key goals of the Junior League of Washington (JLW): giving back to the community and at the same time empowering women to serve in positions of leadership. While the 2022-2023 League year was the first year the program was back in-person since 2020, it still continued in full strength, enriching the lives of those who participated throughout the pandemic.

Part of JLW's Leadership Institute, the GOB program is a course that trains volunteers to feel prepared to take on what – at least to many – can often feel like an intimidating role: board member of a local nonprofit. GOB graduate Laura Lieberman considered board membership to be “the next level” in community service and engagement and, indeed, taking on the responsibility of serving on a board can often feel akin to taking on a second job. Adding to that pressure, many board members have unique management and fiscal duty requirements that members have not yet encountered in their day jobs.

That's where the GOB program comes in. As JLW explains:

“Through this innovative program, members of the League are trained in a variety of substantive and relevant areas, including the roles and responsibilities of nonprofit boards, the board-staff partnership, strategic planning, financial oversight, and fundraising.”

First launched in 2015, the program has been completed by more than 200 members of JLW to date. And while

the large membership and reach of JLW helps position graduates of GOB to make a strong impact in regional nonprofit governance overall, the program itself is a nationwide initiative of Junior Leagues that has even been used to help ensure members of various Leagues are prepared to help communities rebuild after disasters.

For example, according to a case study by The Association of Junior Leagues International, Inc., as New Orleans worked to rebuild in the years after Hurricane Katrina, it became apparent to the Junior League of New Orleans that nonprofit organizations would be a critical part of the recovery and future resilience efforts – and that many nonprofits were in significant need of assistance themselves. To respond to that need, the chapter launched their own GOB program. In just three years, beginning in 2008, well over 300 participants had completed the program and were engaged on 60 different area nonprofit boards.

But, returning focus closer to home, not only are graduates of JLW's GOB program prepared for

board leadership, they are actively sought out by local boards due to their reputation of being able to hit the ground running. For many new board members, there is understandably an adjustment and learning period as a new recruit gets up to speed on the nonprofit as well as general governance. For graduates of the GOB training, however, they're already equipped with many of the skills and insights they'll need to ensure they can start significantly contributing quickly.

“When I attended the Get On Board program I had already served on several boards, but I was looking to hone specific skills and serve on different types of boards that would allow me to make a deeper impact,” explained Krysta Jones, recent graduate of GOB and member of the Leadership Institute Committee. “I gained a new respect for the board staff relationship and developed a new confidence in the community work that I do.”

You'll find GOB graduates serving on boards for nonprofits on a diverse set of issues across the DMV. For more information on the GOB program, visit: <https://www.jlw.org/getonboard/>.

Get on
BOARD
JUNIOR LEAGUE OF WASHINGTON

COMING TO YOU LIVE

It's the Digital Media Committee

Hannah Stubbs



Shalini Ray gives followers an all access pass to Hekima Hapa and Lesley Ware's book talk at the National Book Festival.

Whether or not you are a member of the Junior League of Washington (JLW), you may have seen flashes of League events and photos of members pop up as you scroll through your Instagram feed. The official JLW Instagram is one of many social media apps members of the Digital Media Committee use to showcase important happenings. The Digital Media Committee recognizes social media as one of the best ways to reach members and non-members where they are – online. Live social media coverage of events provides the ideal platform for engagement.

“In general, with our social media, it’s an external facing channel. It’s one of the few channels we have from a communications standpoint that reaches people who aren’t in the League,” explained Jordan Team, Chair of the Digital Media Committee.

With great power comes great responsibility, however. Team and her committee take the job representing the League very seriously, noting the goal of live social media coverage is twofold: 1) an external outreach component for community building with current and potential partners 2) an internal communication element for current and prospective League members.

Shalini Ray, a member of the Digital Media Committee, had this bifurcated goal in mind while overseeing the JLW Instagram account during the National Book Festival this past year. She wanted to highlight the amazing work the League does with its partners and feature exciting moments from this big event to members who could not make it in person.

Ray prepared to cover the event by following the Committee’s recommended procedures to ensure day-of success. These include:

- Gathering the social media handles of important guests for tagging purposes
- Using specific hashtags if applicable
- Understanding which aspects of the event should be highlighted.
- Becoming familiar with the purpose of the event and the “critical players” ahead of time is important so posts, complete with tags and hashtags, can be uploaded on the spot.

Ray underscores a main goal of the coverage is to tell a story from beginning to end – a fitting objective for the National Book Festival. She wanted to make viewers feel like they were actually there at the event.

“Whether it was a Boomerang image or a video, we wanted to make it a lot more live on the stories so people could follow along,” explained Ray whose intent was to drive excitement about the Festival with JLW members.

Elise Bailey, another Digital Media Committee member, took the same approach during her stint of live coverage during JLW’s Weekend of Service – inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. – in January. Bailey attended the Free Minds Book Club writing workshop and broadcasted parts of the event on the League’s Instagram. Free Minds Book Club, one of the League’s community partners, aims to use poetry writing to spark creativity and growth in incarcerated DC youth. Bailey explained how the teens wrote and read verses aloud before receiving feedback from volunteers.

The sensitive nature of the writing prompted Bailey to change her coverage







Ray takes League social media followers to the 2022 National Book Festival.

approach: instead of taking videos, she posted photos and added quotes in the captions. Bailey, a new member, thoroughly enjoyed the event and stayed long past her duties expired. She was not familiar with the event before her assignment and hopes her coverage enlightened people who had not heard of the workshop as well as influenced others to participate in the Weekend of Service next year.

While it may look effortless by the time it hits your social media feed, there’s a lot more going on behind the scenes to

deliver the freshest JLW content. You never know which member might decide to go to an event they saw promoted on the JLW accounts, or which non-member might be inspired to become a part of the League’s orbit, either as a member or through a community partnership.

Now that you’ve had a peek behind the curtain, follow along:

-  Facebook.com/JLWDC
-  @jlwdc
-  @jlwdc
-  @JrLeagueDC
-  LinkedIn.com/company/jlwdc

SUSTAINERS STRIVE TO BE B.O.L.D. BY CREATING AND STRENGTHENING MEMBER CONNECTIONS

Tara Raju



Joint JLW and Junior League of Northern Virginia winery trip.

The 2022-2023 Junior League of Washington (JLW) year set forth the theme of Be B.O.L.D.: Building our League Daily, and both the Sustainer Committee and its members have been creative in ensuring the continued legacy of JLW is maintained by doing exactly that. With nearly 950 Sustainers, these volunteers are integral to the Junior League of Washington's omnipresence in the Washington, DC community.

As JLW's Sustainers reflect on the 2022-2023 JLW year and look forward to the next, they can truly be proud of how they have been B.O.L.D. by continuing to build connections and maintaining those relationships with signature and neighborhood events.

To ensure that all Sustainers had an avenue for informal and organic connection, the Sustainer Committee launched Sustainer Neighborhood Connection (SNC) events this year. SNC events are

organized and hosted by committee volunteers with the goal of connecting Sustainers that are local to each other – which is especially important as JLW members continue to find footing in a post-pandemic setting. Not only did volunteers organize meals at neighborhood restaurants for brunch or dinner and museum outings, but some Sustainers generously offered up their homes to host intimate get-togethers to further foster the camaraderie and connection.



Top left: Sustainers and New Members mingle merrily at the Cookie Exchange. Top right: Attendees were all smiles at the Spring Luncheon held in May. Bottom photo: Attendees of the Fall Luncheon gather on the beautiful balcony of Washington Golf & Country Club.



about our league



Cassandra Moran from Iona Senior Services addresses the attendees of the Sustainers Fall Luncheon at Washington Golf & Country Club.

Debbie Alexander hosted brunch at Sfoglina in Van Ness for the Woodley/Cleveland Park and Van Ness neighborhood group. Sadie Cornelius held an Octoberfest get-together at the Berliner in Georgetown. Leonore Hall hosted an evening get-together for those in Bethesda/Chevy Chase at Terrain Cafe, and Jackie Malkes held an evening of brews (both coffee and beer) at Caboose Commons in Mosaic.

“Without volunteers who are willing to take the initiative to organize and host events simply because they wanted to, these connections could not have happened,” said Sustainer Committee Chair Gretchen Ehle with Vice Chair Virginia Rynk chiming in that they want to “extend the warmest gratitude” to those that have taken on this effort in addition to all of their other JLW and life priorities.

In the Fall of 2022, on a beautiful September afternoon, approximately 70 Sustainers filled the dining room as they joined together for the Sustainer Fall Luncheon at the Washington Golf and Country Club to celebrate fellowship, community, and the League’s philanthropic activities. Joined by several members of the JLW Board of Directors, including JLW President Katherine Rodriguez and JLW community partners from Iona Senior Services and A Wider Circle, the luncheon was a tremendous opportunity to hear how JLW contributes to both of these organizations and opportunities for future engagement.

In early December, the Sustainer Committee partnered with the New Member Committee to host a Cookie Exchange at JLW Headquarters. The event was a sweet way for Sustainers to get into the holiday spirit while sharing



Sustainers mingle during the Spring Luncheon.



Attendees of the Fall Luncheon.

their JLW wisdom and experiences with new members over delicious treats.

As Sustainers rang in 2023, they hosted festive events including the Winter Tea at the Army Navy Club in early February and a reception at the University Club with transfer members. All of these events gathered JLW members to support the rekindling of old friendships while

providing a means to make new friends from different phases of the League with the help of cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and of course, a beautiful setting.

Springing forward to early May, the Sustainer Spring Luncheon at the Congressional Country Club honored the 28 women that became JLW's 2023 Emerita and 50-year members.

As the Sustainers look forward to the upcoming League year, Diane Miller is the slated Sustainer Committee Chair and will continue the momentum of the 2022-2023 Sustainer league year. As Sustainers reflect on their League year and gear up for the next, they have so much to be proud of and, of course, so much to look forward to. •



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NEW MEMBERSHIP COUNCIL FINDS SUCCESS AFTER RETURN TO FULLY IN-PERSON LEAGUE YEAR

Sarah Valerio O'Connell



New Member Committee member, Taylor Thesing, addresses a packed house at New Member orientation

It was a successful year for the Junior League of Washington (JLW) New Membership Council, which consists of the New Member, Member Recruitment, and Transfer Committees. JLW welcomed 263 New Members, along with 88 Transfers from over 25 cities to the 2022-2023 League year. It was a victory that was celebrated by both the council and the League as a whole.

This was the first, fully in-person year since the 2018-2019 League year. Each of the New Membership Council Committees brought a high level of enthusiasm in welcoming our newest members, as well as, prospective members.

“Our goal is to give our new members an environment they can thrive in as they start their journey with JLW,” says New Member Committee Vice Chair and Rising Co-Chair TwensQueen

Jean-Baptiste. To meet their goals, the committee sourced input from new members and new member advisors before tweaking their practices based on the feedback.

“[O]ur goal is to get New Members excited about coming back in person,” said New Member Committee Rising Co-Chair Annie Foegal.

After a few years of being completely virtual and hybrid, committees were



Member Recruitment Committee Chair, Delna Clark offers next steps to potential new members at an Open House event.

eager to make the necessary adjustments to being back in person again.

“Many were happy to be able to bond and socialize with other committee members – especially if they were new to member recruitment and they served on a committee that wasn’t active in the previous league year,” said Delna Clark, Member Recruitment Committee Chair.

When the recruitment season is in full swing, Member Recruitment Committee members can find themselves at the JLW Headquarters multiple times a week for open house and Recruitment Orientation Session (ROS) events, in addition to other League events and activities. To provide a balance, the committee opted to move some of their monthly meetings to a virtual setting.

“Having some virtual monthly meetings helped ensure that we had max committee participation at the open houses and ROS where we needed them

the most interaction with prospective members,” explained Clark. The New Member Committee also offered some flexibility by making some of the required New Member course sessions virtual as well.

“There are likely more changes coming. We are trying to be flexible with people and work with the needs and vision of our committee as well as with the League as a whole. Currently, our plan is to be entirely back in person, except for advisor meetings in December and January, which have traditionally been virtual because of holiday travel and weather,” Foegal adds.

“Having several members that served on this committee prior to the pandemic [allowed us] to capitalize on the lessons learned and best practices of the leadership before us,” said Clark. Throughout the recruitment season, the Member Recruitment Committee

was intentional about “keeping attendees engaged and making them feel welcomed,” Clark shared.

This year, “we shortened the presentation to only key relevant information and then broke the participants into smaller breakout sessions with at least two current members from the Member Recruitment Committee to answer questions and provide firsthand insight into the League’s mission and events,” Clark continued.

It paid off! Member Recruitment hosted nearly 400 prospective members at their open house events and extended 243 invitations to join JLW for the upcoming League year. The New Membership Council has built back their momentum. With quick thinking and flexibility on the part of those who serve, the outlook is bright as we close out the 2022-2023 League year and look forward to 2023-2024. •



Prianka Sharma



Lauren Niles Whalen



Kimberly Price



Onika Williams

REVISITING OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY



Phoenix Ricks



Tracey Tolbert Jones



Nancy Piness



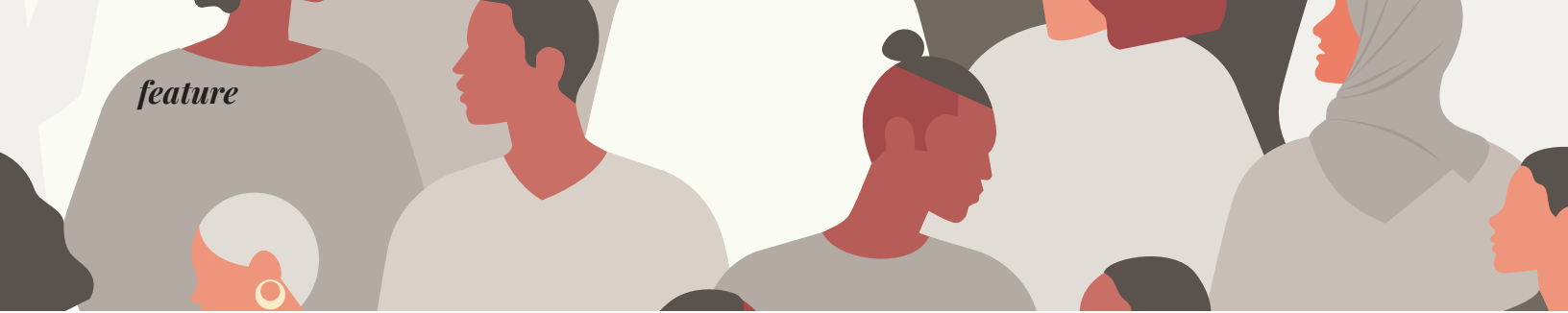
Charlyn Stanberry

In 2020, 3039M covered the launch of the DEIAB Task Force. In 2023, we review the progress made.

Adeyinka Oyesile Ogunlegan

It's been nearly one year since then President-Elect Katherine Rodriguez presented a motion to the Junior League of Washington (JLW)'s Board to form a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Belonging (DEIAB) Task Force for the 2022-2023 League year. The Task Force was charged with continuing the work started

by the Strategic Sustainability Council's Innovation and Incubation Committee and shepherding as JLW President, Katherine Rodriguez explained, a "consultative process to examine and ensure our policies, procedures, and the work we do is rooted in an equitable environment that is reflective of who we are, who we serve, and our values."



“The listening sessions have taken the discussion of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging to a new level within JLV,” noted Piness.

Chaired by Lauren Niles Whalen, with support from Prianka Sharma when Lauren went out on Maternity leave, the DEIAB Task Force since last summer has held dozens of meetings and several virtual Member Listening Sessions, designed to gather direct input from League membership. These sessions, in combination with a deep dive through our archives, and input from past and current leaders the Task Force has set important work in motion to chart a path forward.

Yet, for all of the volunteer members of the DEIAB Task Force, their commitment to the work is about more than the comprehensive report the consultant will produce summarizing its evaluation of League policies, and offering recommendations for areas to improve as well as a roadmap for successful implementation. For these volunteers, the work of the Task Force is deeply personal, inspired by their upbringing or experiences as members, and an overwhelming commitment to helping to shape the future of JLV.

A VOLUNTEER WITH AN ACTION-ORIENTED APPROACH

For Prianka Sharma, an attorney with the federal government, joining the Task Force was about doing her part to support the JLV’s intentional effort towards making sure every member feels both welcome and represented.

“Coming into the Junior League can be intimidating if you don’t know anyone or the history [of the organization]. I want to help create and foster an inclusive and welcoming experience for all JLV members” explained Sharma, an Alexandria resident who has been an active member since 2017.

While balancing the demands of a career, raising her 19 month old son, and also serving on the Nominating Committee, Prianka views the DEIAB Task Force’s work as an action-oriented approach that aligns with JLV’s overall planning efforts. Prianka asserts, “if we want to grow beyond where we are now, we have to undertake the work to both grow the organization

and retain members. We have to do the same inward work that many organizations and corporations across the country are also undertaking, to create a culture of change. This work goes hand in hand with the other organizational shifts such as new focus areas and strategic planning.”

According to Task Force members, over the last several months the group created opportunities for challenging conversations about member experiences that can be elevated to leadership and inform change within the organization.

A SUSTAINABLE POINT OF VIEW FROM SUSTAINERS

“We created a safe space for members to share, but our most important focus was and will continue to be *listening*. Members are driving the message of what it means for JLV to truly be a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization. Fellow Task Force members, Tracey Tolbert Jones and Nancy Piness, both Sustainer Members of the Junior League of Washington, echoed Prianka’s sentiments about the importance of the DEIAB listening sessions and the impact they will have on the ongoing work of the Task Force.

“The listening sessions have taken the discussion of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging to a new level within JLV,” noted Piness.

Over the course of ten virtual meetings held throughout the Fall and Winter of 2022, JLV members opened up about a variety of topics including race, accessibility of events for aging members, affordability and location of events throughout the region, and even how the League welcomes the experiences of queer women and neurodivergent members.

“Nothing was off the table during these [listening] sessions, which means nothing is off the table for the Task Force. We have an opportunity to examine everything thanks to the commitment of leadership and really because folks felt able to open up with their thoughts and experiences. [We] never would have heard or understood the perspective without these sessions,” said Jones emphatically.

Growing up in Plainfield, New Jersey with parents who were active in many grassroots community and civil rights efforts in the tumultuous 1960s, Piness’ family “modeled diversity and inclusion for my brother and me in so many aspects of our lives. These examples became the foundation for how I strive to live my life,” she shared.

Washington, DC has been Piness’ home since arriving to attend college in 1975. She joined the JLV in 1982 and the Membership Diversification Committee shortly after

its formation after participating in several invitational creative brainstorming sessions about the diverse non-profit organizations with which the JLW should be in dialogue and collaboration.

Raised by non-practicing Jewish parents, Piness was aware that her mother, a devoted and well-respected volunteer leader, was not welcome to join the Junior League because of her religion, despite her decades of distinguished community service. Piness wanted to see this discrimination alleviated everywhere.

In the fall of 1988, in an article entitled, “Membership Diversification: A Diverse Challenge” in *Potomac Pages*, the JLW Magazine at the time, noted that “The AJLI names membership diversification as its ‘number one priority.’” It went on to mention that in 1987, the Association of Junior Leagues International (AJLI), formed the AJLI Admissions Task Force (ATF) “to eradicate any appearance of League judgment or discrimination, and to accommodate the changing roles of women in today’s mobile society.”

In 1987-1988, Piness and former Active member, Dr. Muriel Poston Hughes, were selected by the Nominating Committee to represent the JLW at the Advanced Membership Diversification Network Training, sponsored by AJLI, over two weekends, in Clayton, Missouri, with the intent of being able to return to facilitate culture changes and heighten awareness of diversity and inclusion throughout the JLW membership.

Early JLW efforts focused on changing the name of the Christmas Shop to A Capital Collection and the creation of a “Sponsor Pool” for prospective new members by removing barriers to membership, such as having to have one’s mother or aunt sponsor them for the League.

The JLW also adopted more culturally sensitive policies such as not hosting meetings or special events on the religious holidays of major faith traditions like Good Friday or Yom Kippur.

Over time, Piness has witnessed and championed the steps the League took to embrace diversity, not only in its membership and programming, but also the deliberate steps to diversify representation on the Board and committees, create new and inclusive service opportunities and build bridges in the community by partnering with leaders of other nonprofits and volunteer-focused organizations within the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

“The Junior League of Washington is now becoming much more reflective of the community we serve,” said Piness. “I am so hopeful and proud of the tremendous commitment of our

current and past Boards of Directors to DEIAB by the formation of our Task Force and the allocation of funds to hiring a consultant to support and guide us into the future. To quote the late AJLI President and JLW member, the Rev. Margaret Graham, “We are not here to preserve this organization for our mothers and grandmothers. We are here to change this organization for our daughters and granddaughters.”

Jones shares Piness’ historic perspective of JLW’s journey towards embracing the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging and her hope for the future of these efforts within the League.

As the daughter of a member who integrated the Junior League of Charlottesville, VA in 1981 as the organization’s first Black member, Jones has firsthand experience with the change that intentional efforts to grow a more diverse membership can have on the Junior League. Now in her 16th year with JLW, Tracey has served in a variety of Community, In-League, and Fundraising roles within the League and sees her role on the DEIAB as a continuation of that service as well as her family’s legacy.

LOOKING AHEAD

Thanks to the commitment of the volunteers Prianka Sharma, Nancy Piness, Tracey Tolbert Jones, Phoenix Ricks, Onika Williams, Charlyn Stanberry, Kimberly Price, and Lauren Niles-Whalen, this year’s Task Force Chair, the DEIAB Task Force will move from the gather, listen, and digest phase of their efforts. Next steps involve working with JLW leadership to set deliverables and a plan of action that keeps the Junior League of Washington on the path towards making sure this organizational moment of reflection has a lasting impact on the future of the organization, the lives of its members and the community we support. •

You Can Do



It!

You Too Can Lead in the League



Janay Eyo

Voluntarism is what the Junior League of Washington does best – and it is an excellent way for women to not only make a difference in our community, develop new skills, and meet like-minded individuals. Leadership begins when members are interested in taking their volunteering experience to the next level. Becoming a leader in JLW may seem daunting at first, but it can be a highly rewarding experience through which you can develop valuable skills that will benefit you in your personal and professional life.

Each year, the Development & Training Committee hosts a seminar for members interested in leadership, providing the opportunity for an interactive question-and-answer session with the Nominating Committee on the best way to signal your interest in leadership.

Fortunately, getting involved is not hard – and anyone at any stage of their League career is invited to participate in leadership! Here are some tips on how you can lead in JLW:

1 *Identify Your Goals and Interests:*

Before you begin your search for leadership opportunities, take some time to reflect on your goals and interests, both in and out of the League. Think about what you're passionate about and what kind of impact you want to make in your community. Consider what skills you have to offer (or are willing to learn) and what kind of committees would allow you to utilize those skills.

2 *Complete the Willing to Serve Form:*

This form is on the JLW website for members interested in a chair position, and it goes directly to the Nominating Committee. The form, which is a questionnaire regarding skills and qualities you would bring to JLW leadership, is open to any members interested in leadership who might be more flexible on which committee they lead.

3 *Raise Your Hand:*

Do not be afraid to nominate yourself. Raising your hand can set you up for success to lead your dream committee. Follow the advice of Isabella Demougeot, Nominating Committee Chair: "The best thing someone can do if they're interested in leadership is simply nominating themselves."

4 *Get Involved in Your Committee Placement:*

As soon as you have your committee assignment, introduce yourself to the chair. Tell them you are interested in leadership within the committee and ask where you can help out. This will establish you as dependable, and you will gain opportunities to help the chair on projects or events that will help you gain skills related to the committee.

5 *Start Small, Dream Big:*

If you're a newer member, leadership looks good on you too! Don't be afraid to consider starting with a smaller leadership role, such as leading a specific project, or saying yes to a Vice Chair role. This will allow you to gain experience and build relationships with other volunteers and leaders within the committee. Talk to your committee chair about your goals. If you are interested in a chair position, you can share all of your experience from your personal and professional life pre-JLW in the Willing to Serve form. Have no experience? No worries. Enthusiasm and an appetite to learn are always welcomed!

"When looking at the composition of JLW leaders, we look at new leaders as well as returning leaders alike to grow the leadership pipelines," adds Demougeot. When slating chairs, the Nominating Committee often selects people to co-chair committees who have opposite experience levels to accommodate newer members in leadership.

6 *Use Your Network:*

Building relationships with other members is a valuable way to learn about leadership opportunities within the League. If someone has a position you'd like to hold someday, don't be afraid to reach out to them to learn about their path to leadership. If you're interested in a particular leadership role, consider expressing your interest to the current leaders. Attending other committee events, and even taking a secondary placement (if your time allows), are other great ways to connect with leaders.

7 *Attend Leadership Training:*

JLW offers many leadership training programs, including the Membership Development Council's Leadership Institute and numerous Development and Training opportunities. Attending these programs are an excellent way to develop your leadership skills, especially if you're interested in being on the Board of Directors, and to gain valuable knowledge about the Junior League and its mission.

8 *Don't Stop Nominating:*

The Nominating Committee's slating process begins in the fall of the previous year for the Board and Nominating, and February for Chairs and ACDs. Sometimes positions may need to be re-slating, meaning if you aren't selected for a position during the first round, you could be selected at another time if you keep nominating yourself.

The Nominating Committee works hard to select people for positions they would be most suited for – Demougeot refers to it as a "puzzle piece process." Their goal is to put the best people in the right positions. To the committee, it doesn't matter where you've been – for instance, if you've taken a leave of absence from the League, or if you've turned down opportunities to lead in the past – the Nominating Committee is focused on you in the present and how you can best serve the JLW of today, of tomorrow, and for the next 110 years. •

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CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT

How Miss DC Brings League Lessons Center Stage

Erika Burnett

What does a beauty queen, an aide in Vice President Kamala Harris's office, and a Junior League of Washington (JLW) member have in common? All describe Miss District of Columbia and JLW member, Alivia Roberts.

Alivia Roberts, who originally hails from Shannon, Mississippi, made Washington, DC her home, to pursue a master's degree in Public Administration at The George Washington University. Roberts was raised with the value of giving back to the community and helping others. During her childhood, she began volunteering through 4-H, a U.S.-based network of youth organizations whose mission is "engaging youth to reach their fullest potential while advancing the field of youth development."

When Roberts turned 13, she began competing in the Miss America Organization, beginning with the Miss Mississippi's Outstanding Teen Pageant, the sister program to Miss Mississippi for women ages 13-17. She competed for four years and in her final year of eligibility, she finished as a double preliminary winner - winning both phases of competition in her competition group: talent and evening gown/onstage question - and finished 3rd runner up to Miss Mississippi's Outstanding Teen.

Roberts immediately began the next year's competition in Miss Mississippi, which she'd competed in for four years and won a talent preliminary award. After moving to DC, Roberts competed in the Miss District of Columbia Competition for three years and in her final year, won



Alivia Roberts enjoying her tenure as Miss DC.

PHOTO CREDIT: ROBERTS' PERSONAL INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT

"I grew up watching the Miss America Competition very early in life. I was always impressed by how intelligent, talented, and poised the young ladies were on stage, and I wanted to grow up to be just like them."

PHOTO CREDIT: ROBERTS' PERSONAL INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT



Left: Alivia Roberts being crowned Miss DC in June 2022. Below: Alivia Roberts (Miss DC) onstage at the Women's Leadership Breakfast with JLW President, Katherine Rodriguez, and President-Elect, Kimberly Price.



the overall talent and interview awards in addition to being crowned Miss DC.

Eager to find a sense of community similar to her days in 4-H, Roberts considered many different volunteering opportunities when she first moved to Washington, DC, but, in a sea of different organizations, JMW stood out to her because of its commitment to service. In fact, Roberts emphasized specifically that JMW's focus on supporting pathways to opportunity, including initiatives that promote literacy, was her main draw and deciding factor in seeking membership.

In 2019, Roberts joined the League with the Horton's Kids Committee as her mini placement. Horton's Kids is a nonprofit that offers comprehensive services to the children of Ward 8. During her mini placement, Roberts was able to work virtually with a first grader to improve her reading skills. This inspired Roberts to choose a community

placement during her first active year the following League year where she could see the impact of her efforts and mentor young women.

Working with the Washington School for Girls both works with her busy schedule and has helped Roberts and her committee be creative in their efforts to serve the community during the pandemic. Making a marked impact on the community is one of the reasons that Roberts is proud to be a JMW member and has felt a great deal of support and camaraderie from other members.

During Roberts' first active year as a Junior League member, she was invited to attend the 2022 Women's Leadership breakfast as Miss DC, where a highlight for her included meeting the current League President, Katherine Rodriguez. While at the Women's Leadership Breakfast, Roberts was approached by other JMW members conveying their

excitement and support for her as she prepared to compete in the Miss America competition which took place in December 2022. While she unfortunately did not win, she did represent Washington, DC and JMW in a positive way and was able to reiterate her commitment to the community.

When asked if there was any overlap between the experience she has gained between her volunteer work with the League and competing in pageants, Roberts answered:

"Similar to the Miss America Organization, JMW focused on women's empowerment and I was drawn to the organization because of the women I met who were members upon moving to DC. I enjoy being around other like-minded women who desire to leave an impact on the community around them. I leave every event empowered, filled with joy and happiness." •

President-Elect, Kimberly Price, addresses the crowd before the raffle.



Guests mixed and mingled on the top floor of Loughborough House.



SNOWFALL *and* STARLIGHT:

Julie Crump, Bre Gaffney, Melissa Kelley, and Mandy Asgeirsson donned their holiday apparel for the annual festive fete.



Bits of rosemary made for the perfect garnish for seasonal cocktails.





Emily Droeder and Rachel Harris pose under the twinkle lights.

A Holiday Cocktail Party

Margaret Harward



The JLW Board of Directors were all smiles at Snowfall and Starlight.

spotlight on our members



Katherine Rodriguez, Brittany SmithShimer, and Maureen Abel sparkle and shine in their cocktail attire.

This past December, more than 220 Junior League of Washington (JLW) members, friends, and family gathered at the Loughborough House to celebrate the holiday season at the JLW *Snowfall and Starlight* Holiday Cocktail Party. In its second year in person, the soiree was the culminating event for the Holiday Celebration Committee - which raised more than \$53,000 through Fall Photos, the Holiday Raffle, and the Holiday Cocktail Party to support the work of JLW in our community.

This gorgeous floral display was created by Wild Blooms by Summer Bravo.



Troy and Chloe Taylor, Katherine Rodriguez, Summer and Matthew Bravo enjoy the evening's festivities.

The Holiday Celebration Committee, led by Co-Chairs Jessica Mosely and Cady Clapp, spent over a week turning the Loughborough House into a winter wonderland, complete with an outdoor tent, magical lighting, and a stunning floral installation by JLW's own Wild Blooms by Summer Bravo.

spotlight on our members



Moments of mirth were shared as a prize-winning ticket was pulled during the Holiday Celebration raffle.

This year's Holiday Raffle included four amazing prizes: an Apple Watch, a floral subscription to Wild Blooms by Summer Bravo, a 55" Samsung Frame TV, and a weekend getaway at the Omni Homestead Resort. The drawing took place during the Holiday Cocktail Party and the lucky winners were Kayla Connor, Otto Asgeirsson, Emma Rowland, and Jessica Mosley.



The floral display served as a beautiful backdrop for party guests to pose in their finery.



The Holiday Celebration Committee Steering celebrated a successful event.

The Holiday Celebration Committee led by Cady Clapp, Jessica Mosley, Emily Droder, Jennifer Fitzpatrick, and Kayleigh Gordon would like to especially thank Ourisman dealership, the raffle sponsor, as well as Jerry Tsao from District Cooper Photography for his support at the Fall Photos event. •



ALL'S WELL *That Ends Well*

How a virtual book club brings Shakespeare into the 21st Century

Andrea Flemming

When we think of William Shakespeare, we all have a story that comes to mind. After all, Shakespeare is often associated with classic stories that stand the test of time. However, do the images and characters of the 16th century hold relevance in the more modern, diverse world of today? That is a question that the Folger Shakespeare Library's Book Club, Words Words Words, regularly poses to its members. The answer is perhaps more than you may think given the array of authors, playwrights, and directors that continue to draw from Shakespearean themes time and time again.

One notable example of a 21st century author borrowing themes from Shakespeare is the internationally acclaimed author Bolu Babalola. Author of *Love in Colour*, Babalola captures elements of historical love stories reimagined through a West African lens. Even with common thematic sources from Shakespeare, Babalola's diverse artistic vision remains unique by how her stories are told, making it an ideal work for Words Words Words to discuss.

"Both Babalola and Shakespeare were inspired by the myth of Pyramus and Thisbe, to greatly contrasting effects," read one of the discussion questions provided by Folger at the June 2022 meeting.



Love in Colour by Bolu Babalola is one of many modern-day works that the Words Words book club has discussed.

The Folger Shakespeare Library established its Words, Words, Words Book Club in August 2020, to engage patrons because the theater was closed due to the pandemic. Over the last three years, participants from across the globe have joined the monthly online Book Club via Zoom to discuss a wide range of genres in The Folger’s collection of Shakespeare-inspired novels. To keep meetings fresh, the book club hosts engaging guest speakers, poses robust discussion questions, and utilizes breakout rooms for more intimate discussion. What started as an informal book club has become such a huge success that it is now considered one of the most popular activities within the library.

“When I am in virtual rooms, the broad range of experiences, intellect, and perspectives from participants is always eye-opening and offers brilliant insights,” recounts Madeline Livermore, a member of the JMW Folger Shakespeare Library Committee. The Folger’s collection is helping to transform common misconceptions about the relevance of Shakespeare adaptations.

The Junior League of Washington (JLW)’s Folger Shakespeare Library Committee primarily volunteers with the library’s Public Programs Division. When the need arose to pivot its programming, JLW committee members stepped up to assist with organizing and facilitating discussions in book club sessions.

“Our volunteer efforts in the past focused on helping behind the scenes, and now this opportunity has helped us find a way to become immersed in the literature and involved with patrons, a silver lining of the pandemic,” stated Carrie Balazs, Committee Vice Chair. The Words, Words, Words Book Club started out as a temporary solution but has now become a mainstay in Folger’s public programs.

There are no current plans to move the book club to in-person meetings at

this time. Participation is free and open to all, but registration is required for Zoom sessions. Meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month, apart from the summer season. A list of past and present book collections, with discussion

questions, can be found online at the book club’s page on Folger’s website. Contact Margaret van Wassenaer, current and 2023-2024 Folger Shakespeare Committee Chair, to learn more details and ways to get involved. •

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FINDING ART THROUGH SISTERHOOD

*A conversation with
saleswoman-turned-artist,
Krystal McLear*

Valecia Wilson

Krystal McLear, a top sales, training, and leadership professional from Fort Washington, Maryland, didn't expect to develop a love of art as a byproduct of joining the Junior League of Washington (JLW). After years of urging from her good friend Latoria Eason-Brent, a JLW member, McLear finally applied and was accepted into her local Junior League Chapter in Oakland, California, where she'd lived since 2016.

"There is more to be done," the mother of two says, recalling why she decided to join the Junior League. "There's more that I can be giving to my community, [to] my sisters, to people I don't even know. There's more that I could be giving."

For McLear, the League offered an opportunity to do just that, and in 2020,

she began her new member year. During the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, McLear dove into a completely virtual Junior League experience. As a member of Junior League of Oakland-East Bay, she helped manage a donation project and spearheaded chapter support of a nonprofit organization. But, soon, McLear was ready to return home to the Washington, DC metropolitan area and transferred to the Junior League of Washington in the following year. During her transfer year with JLW, she was placed on the Iona Senior Services Committee.

During the placement fair, McLear was torn between several placements, but ultimately decided to narrow her options to a placement that was different from her day-to-day work and which allowed her to make a difference.



“I didn’t realize I was a budding artist!”

“It was the best placement for me,” she says, reflecting on her early experiences working with Iona Senior Services. Her volunteer activities included delivering groceries to seniors on Saturdays and creating and delivering holiday cards. However, it was the art fairs showcasing the seniors’ artwork that sparked a creative streak and seeded what would become a blossoming art business.

McLear was no stranger to developing creative works. Producing over 600 written pieces over the years, she has always considered herself a creative. She credits her mother – a pianist, vocalist, playwright, and overall creative phenom – as the source of her creativity. But, it wasn’t until a much-anticipated week off work in the summer of 2022 that she was finally able to lean into visual art.

“I went shopping, bought these huge canvases and textured materials, and started mixing up plaster and glue and paint and started making [these] gorgeous, gorgeous works of art,” she muses bright-eyed, remembering the process of how she created her first pieces.

As she developed her own unique artistic style, McLear began volunteering for more and more senior art fairs. She was inspired by the artists and developed relationships with them. The artists, mostly women, specialized in a wide array of mediums including cultural dollmaking and dioramas.

Through her conversations, McLear found that they were eager to share their perspectives on everything from their own evolutions as artists to pricing and marketing tips. She soaked up all that she could from these women – their personal narratives, their families, and even stories about American history.

McLear describes her own artistic approach as one that is inspired by the people and spaces the work is intended for. She uses commercial paints, acrylic, glue, plaster, and puddy to develop works. One of her favorite techniques includes using hair picks to create fine waves across the canvas.

Krystal McLear, Marketing Professional and Artist

spotlight on our members



“In many ways, being placed on Iona has inspired me to keep creating and to keep seeking knowledge. [It has] pointed me in directions where I can develop my craft and where I can grow as an artist [and] a woman.”

Reflecting on the mentorship she received working with the senior artists, McLear believes the experience has been “consistent with the values of The Junior League.” For example, she notes that the opportunity for intergenerational sisterhood provided by Iona Senior Services is just one example of many that she has experienced so far, citing other occasions where she or other Junior League members have leaned on the expertise of elder women for knowledge and empowerment. McLear found that the Junior League has given her an opportunity to

focus on things that are aligned with her purpose and talents amidst the many pressures she and many women face to focus primarily on romantic relationships, family, and career.

McLear wants her work to “generate a legacy for [herself]” and her family. That legacy, that passion, she sees herself pouring into the women around her, even bringing them into the fold of The Junior League sisterhood.

“My girlfriend harassed me for four years before I got the hint,” McClear laughs. “Now that I get it and I understand



At left: McLear displays a completed painting that experiments with texture and contrast. At right: McLear poses with one of her many works.

the value, I want to tell everyone I know [about The Junior League]!” To this end, she has sponsored, to date, four close friends in their applications to be a part of J.L.W.

Despite her busy schedule, McLear continues to volunteer with the Iona Senior Services Committee. She has turned it into a family affair, often inviting her sons (28 and 12), her boyfriend, and his daughters to help out.

As for her art, McLear has already received several commissions for her work and is learning to develop a marketing practice so that her art can be a source of income. She continues to take commissions and recently established her artist page on Instagram, @Dopeartenergy.

In the future, McLear envisions her artistic practice developing and expanding into portraiture and photography. Building on what she has learned from the seniors at Iona and from members of JLW, she is looking forward to what is in store for her as a woman and as a prolific creator.

“You’re never too old to continue to develop your talents,” McLear advises. “As long as you’re true to yourself and your God-given talent, someone will always be interested in it.” •



Above: A colorful work of McLear’s creates a focal point on a white wall. Above right: McLear and her two sons serve looks at an exhibit of Yayoi Kusama’s Kabocha (Pumpkin).

“I think sometimes as women we get so bogged down with what we have to do. My involvement with Iona and my involvement with Junior League consistently reminds me how important it is for me to focus [on] my personal growth.”



During the COVID-19 pandemic, people around the world decluttered their closets, attempted home renovation projects, collectively watched over 5.3 billion minutes of *Tiger King*, and spent way too many hours indoors. This resulted in 59% of Americans taking up new hobbies including baking (sourdough bread, anyone?), gardening, creating TikTok videos, and reading, according to *The Atlantic*.

As reported by *Literary Hub*, during the pandemic, people read 33% more books than they normally would. The women of the Junior League of Washington (JLW) are no exception – they love to read! In an attempt to create an online community when gathering in-person wasn't an option, the JLW book club (like many other things) went virtual.

Members read books such as *Malibu Rising* by Taylor Jenkins Reid and *They Wish They Were Us* by Jessica Goodman. They would then meet in Zoom rooms to discuss their thoughts and try to salvage some sense of normalcy. This sense of community encouraged members to stay safe through social distancing.

Flash-forward to this past fall, the JLW book club was able to hold their first in-person meeting since the beginning of the pandemic. As soon as members walked into Politics and Prose, the excitement about being back together



JLW members gather to discuss *Little Fires Everywhere*. From left to right: Erika Cole, Nicole Crom, Lindy Chiaia, Amanda Gray Bailey, Christina DiBerardino, Casey Shea, Megan Viviano, Marybeth Lilly, Casey Pola.

was palpable. Members gathered together, and enjoyed some snacks and bubbly, while discussing that month's book: *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* also by Taylor Jenkins Reid. The in-person event was such a huge success the League decided to host the spring book club in person as well.

On a Sunday afternoon in late March, a group of members met at the historic Loughborough House to catch up, socialize, and chat about *Little Fires Everywhere* by Celeste Ng, the spring book selection. Members were guided through a series of open-ended questions led by the book club subcommittee, and discussed plotlines from the book – such as single mother Mia's

journey to becoming an artist and her daughter Pearl's chance to become a "normal" teenager after meeting the Richardson family.

The discussion topic that yielded one of the more passionate discussions, however, was about the different types of mother-daughter relationships in the novel and how the different family dynamics resonated with each of the members in attendance.

"It was great being able to spend time with old and new friends and see how my perspectives changed since the last time I read the book," explained Marybeth Lilly, who first read the book a few years ago and re-read it for book club.

Once the group worked their way through all the predetermined questions, everyone stuck around to have a more informal conversation about their upcoming weekends, wedding plans, and DC's famous cherry blossoms. As those in attendance chatted away, it was clear everyone expressed their gratitude that the book clubs are back in-person.

"It was a lovely afternoon talking about the book [...] during the pandemic I didn't get to maximize my Junior League experience," said Christina DiBerardino. Amanda Gray Bailey agreed and chimed in, "[The] in-person book clubs are more personal because you can make quick side comments to

your neighbors while still being a part of the overarching conversation.”

All the members agreed that the best description of the book was given by DiBerardino:

“Everyone has little moments, or sparks, happening all throughout their lives and sometimes, everything just goes up in flames.” DiBerardino’s sentiment

echoed a quote from the book’s author Celeste Ng:

“Sometimes you need to scorch everything to the ground, and start over. After the burning the soil is richer, and new things can grow. People are like that, too. They start over. They find a way.”

Members interested in attending the next book club should keep an eye out

for more information on the League’s digital platforms.

Can’t wait until the fall to start reading along with the club? The JLW Board shared their favorite books from all different genres – there’s something for everyone on our bookshelf. Pick a book and who knows, you may just discover (or rediscover) a love for reading. •



The JLW Board's Favorite Books

***The Power of One* by Bryce Courtenay** - "A story of a young boy in South Africa during apartheid and how he faced trials as an English boy in Afrikaaner-controlled South Africa. He develops friendships across races, cultures and in unique ways and eventually helps to improve living environments for prisoners. I love the book because it shows how just one person can affect change." - Gretchen Ehle

***The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot** - "As a cancer prevention researcher the story of Henrietta Lacks is both inspiring and sobering. The impact her cells have had on many medical advancements is amazing, but the story also serves as a reminder of the importance of building trust in communities involved in research." - Randi Williams

***A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towels** - "Utterly charming, writing so beautiful that you'll want to slow down to closely read every sentence." - Maureen Abel

***The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett** - "This book about the struggles of identical twins throughout their lifetime and how they are so different but still so similar hits home for me as an identical twin." - Kimberly Price

***The Go-Giver* by Bob Burg and John David Mann** - "I do my best to always come from a place of contribution in both my business and personal life. The principles outlined in this book have given me a more intentional way to do this and reap the benefits of what they define as 'stratospheric success.'" - Raiko Dai

Peruse the bookcase for the rest of the JLW Board's favorite books!



Members of the 1912 Legacy Circle

Ashley MacLeay	Erin Cromer	Martha Kendrick Kettmer
Barbara Franklin	Jessica Taylor White	Nancy Pyne
Carly Mitchell	Kelly Hunter	Rita Lee
Carolyn Lowry	Maria Estefania	Sarah Carey
Courtney Mesmer	Marta Hernandez	Tycely Williams

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