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Spring 2004

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JLM and Celebrity Cruises Host Fabulous Third Annual Event

By [Lauren Harrison](#), Chair

The Junior League of Miami celebrated its third annual Women Who Make a Difference luncheon and awards event before a sell-out crowd on Sunday, March 14, 2004, aboard top-rated, premium cruise line Celebrity Cruises' Millennium in Port Everglades. The ceremony presented the awards in recognition of remarkable women in our community who have made a significant impact through their volunteer efforts in improving the lives of at-risk women and children. The event raised more than \$72,000 for Junior League community projects. The event was covered in the "Neighbors" Section of The Herald, by Coral Gables Magazine, Social Magazine, and by Entertainment News & Views.

This year, awards were presented to five incredible women: Carol Berns, Psy.D. and Mindy Cassel, Ph.D. of the Children's Bereavement Center; JLM Past President Julia R. Bianchi of the Fisher Island Philanthropic Fund, Kristi House and the Junior League of Miami; Lee Klein, the Chairman and CEO of the Children's Cancer Caring Center; and the Honorable Bonnie Lano Rippingille, Sisters of the Heart and the Women's Park. The Junior League of Miami was delighted to feature guest speaker Eileen Nexer Brown, co-chair of the Girls Advocacy Project (GAP) Community Advisory Board.

The event featured a champagne reception, a delicious seated six-course brunch and included a raffle to win an incredible 10-, 11-, or 12-day European cruise. The fabulous donation of a one-half-carat diamond gemstone by Montica Jewelry resulted in an exciting "Diamonds & Champagne" event, which raised \$2,500 in proceeds for JLM's Community Partners campaign. A fashion show by Saks Fifth Avenue dazzled the crowd and a silent auction completed the festivities. Assistant Chairs Gretchen Kirtley and Lise-Marie Wertanzl, Auction Chair Ivette Berisiartu-Hoffman, and Treasurer and Table Host Captain Teresa Thornburg, worked tirelessly along with the entire committee, including Alexandra Aymerich, Elaine Cuervo, Leslie Hoy, Kyla Kowal-Caliendo, Allison Machado, Jennifer McColskey Quezada, Samantha Schosberg and Karin Wilborn-English, to ensure the success of this very special day.

Our generous sponsors of this 100% underwritten event included Celebrity Cruises; the law firm of Genovese, Joblove & Battista, P.A.; Gibraltar Bank; and McClain & Company, L.C. In-kind sponsors included Montica Jewelry; Saks Fifth

Avenue Dadeland; Capretto; Aqua Spa; Elemis Spa Merrick Park; and Orchids by Jamie. Our special thanks to Lise-Marie and Dietmar Wertanzl for making this incredible day possible by serving as our Celebrity hosts! The Committee also sends its heartfelt thanks to our 33 table hosts, including many JLM actives and sustainers, who helped us sell-out the event by more than 50% before the first invitation was mailed!! Thank you for your contribution to our success!

Check out the JLM website for the complete photo gallery!

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20 Questions for Amy Sussman, President 2004-05

1. How long have you been in the League?

About 10 years

2. What is your most memorable moment in the League?

Calling Debbie Korge on the telephone to tell her we didn't make the \$50,000 she had budgeted for Golden Palm Gift Market...long pause...we made \$100,000!

3. What is your favorite time of year? Why?

Summer. It's the time of year that I feel best.

4. Who is your role model? Why?

Eleanor Roosevelt. She was a brilliant woman who helped everyone around her realize their potential for greatness.

5. What is your greatest accomplishment? Why?

It is yet to come.

6. If you could have dinner with anyone, who would it be and what would you talk about?

My grandparents! They have all been gone for a very long time and I have a lot of questions for them.

7. What is your biggest hope?

That we can all just get along and be inspired by one another.

8. How can you improve the League next year?

By letting others do their jobs.

9. What is your favorite place to visit or spend time?

Anywhere with friends and loved ones.

10. What is the first record you ever bought?

It may have been ELO (Electric Light Orchestra)

11. What was the last book you read?

The Master Butchers Singing Club

12. What is the best advice you've ever gotten and who gave it to you?

If you want to keep a secret...don't tell anyone. My dad told me that one.

13. What is one thing about yourself that members would not believe?

I played the violin as a kid AND I can bail hay!

14. If you could have one thing free for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Shoes! But Eleanor Roosevelt would have said peace.

15. What are your pet peeves?

People that say they are going to be brief and aren't.

16. What would you be doing on a typical Sunday afternoon?

Playing tag team with my husband while we both try to take care of our 2 year old and maintain our sanity.

17. What's one thing you can't live without?

My family.

18. How do you unwind?

With a great glass of wine and my husband.

19. What do you think will be the easiest thing about being President?

Having Andria Hanley as my President Elect!

20. What is your favorite thing to do every day?

Meditate on the positive.

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A Salute to the Board

By [Ruby Nell Johnson](#), *Vice President, Community*

“We will not be remembered by our words, but by our kind deeds. Life is not measured by the breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath.” These words are the outgoing legacy to the JLM 2003-2004 Officers, to the incoming JLM 2004-2005 Officers. We salute you and wish you well, as does our entire membership, because you are the best and the brightest that League members could rustle up this time around. So, as you pick up the mantle where we left off, take a moment to find a special person and/or project and make a difference in how they and the community will remember you.

President

Congratulations to Karen! You made it! The end is in sight, and although we know you have enjoyed it, it’s time for a break, right?? We hope that as you go ‘sustaining’ you will grace us with both your presence and your sage advice...we always need it.

Membership Council

Membership has its privileges, you know! Loretta Nido is sure to agree, as she moves on to become chair-elect of the Nominating Committee, while Vicky Hucks rises to VP Membership. Vicky will be ready to give access to “members-only benefits,” to those who are looking for memberships that can never be cancelled or expire as long as all of all her obligations are honored. Looking for the greatest return for your investment? Then Jennifer Pflieger has the membership card for which all prospective members can apply. Christy Falco will sorely miss receiving electronic applications, but not for long, as she fills a spot on the Nominating Committee. Just as someone signs on the dotted line, Jen Green is ready to place that provisional soon after graduation. That’s something she learned well from Maggie Rossi, who will stay around as a member. But you know Maggie, she needs more to keep her motor running, so she will also serve on the Nominating Committee representing the 30-something crowd. And Diana Huling, the incoming Chair of the Nominating Committee, has her work cut out for her as she fills the nominating shoes left behind by Debbie Corbishley who is going sustaining.

Planning Council

The Planning Council is the League’s road map that steers and aims to improve and plan for the Leagues’ future. Leslie Cooper will assume the helm of this engine and chart the future course of the League with the help of Planning Council Members-at-Large: Kim Brigham; Thomasina Turner Diggs (who is an old hand with the Council); Susan Lerner (the newest Member-at-Large); and we all know that Vicky Lukis’ passion and compassion will ripen into an advocacy fruit ready for the picking! Not to worry, Gail Scott, the outgoing VP Planning, is remaining on the Board as VP Development, and as such will be strategically placed to share lessons learned with Leslie. I bet you weren’t aware of the endless possibilities of our Planning Council!

Community Council

“There are some things that money can’t buy,” — and for everything else there’s the awesome women who make up the outgoing Community Council: Hillary Scurtis, Tina Boresow, Kristin Wherry, Joelle Allen, Thomasina Turner Diggs, Vicki Lukis, Libby Witherspoon, Kelly Johnson, Morgan Smith, Ashley Cusack, Meg Valls, Stephanie Demos, Liz Spivack, Angel Michaels, Karen Guy and Karen Clement. We gladly pass our community batons to the incoming VP Community, Stephanie Demos, and her committee members. We welcome you and offer you some truth about community council as you continue the fertile community work we leave behind with our fingerprints, footprints, and indelible voice messages of love and nurturing dripping with nostalgia in the trenches. This Council is the linchpin that literally connects the League to “Families At Risk.” They are the beneficiaries of our resources including our money, volunteer hours, and ourselves, we spare nothing when we give. Our Council is the looking glass to those we serve, the open door to those in need. It is our first response to those in our communities who are homeless, enduring family violence, emotionally-needy children and women who let us know we have learned and grown from each other. Community Council is where we really show our human side.

Finance Council

“In my career, when I have the discipline to stay balanced, my work is refreshing, energetic, creative, focused and passionate. When I don’t stay balanced, no matter how hard I work, I can’t even appreciate the results. It’s a long, hard journey with no apparent destination.”

The kernel of truth embedded above is a gift to all when we move to embrace balance that far exceeds the bottom line on our financial reports, to that which empowers and benefits all those that we serve. VP Finance Christine Griffard has effortlessly taught us this lesson this entire League year, and the class act to follow is Lauren Harrison, who slides into our finances

having already demonstrated her competency and familiarity with balancing our dollars with her seamless nurturing ways as our outgoing Treasurer. They are together the “best of the best.” We say thanks to Jennifer Robinson, Britta Chambers, Sandra Fairman, Maria Byrd, Teresa Thornberg, Lorrie Martin and Carrie Ruiz. And, to the incoming members, you will value everything and everyone’s contributions to carry on the work of the League.

Communications Council

“We’ve cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul. We’ve conquered the atom, but not our prejudice. We write more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less. We’ve learned to rush, but not to wait. We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less.” Fortunately, this last adage isn’t the case this year thanks to Keith Landon and her committee chairs: Bibi Cruz-Ledon, Jennifer Kaufman, Maria Robbins, Mayra Lindsay, Tere Acosta, Valerie Harvey, Juliet Bianca, Vicky Hucks, Margaret Nee and Debbie Dietz. They have left a legacy for Cybelle Santo Domingo and her incoming council. Keith will continue on the Board as the Community Advisory Liaison, so, not to worry, Cybelle, Keith will be within arm’s reach for any advice you might need.

Development Council

“My cup runneth over!” thanks to the Development Council. This is very descriptive of Susan Lerner and her stellar committee members and their fundraising successes: Meredith Mills, Sheri Shoup, Kara Moss, Bibi Cruz-Ledon, Lauren Harrison, Jamie Adams and Candace Vassillion. They learned together that, “A good exercise for the heart is to bend down and help another up.” The Committee leaves to Gail Scott and her incoming council members a terrific group of fundraisers, which have yielded generous dividends. Now if only the new committee could learn how to turn straw into gold, we could all fund our pet projects until our hearts were content.

President-Elect

Andria Hanley, a lady in waiting, not much to do but absorb all there is to know about the League. “Life for you in the League at this juncture is what you make of it, kind of like Play-Doh.” So, remember now is the time when you can simply be beautiful and enjoy not having to take responsibilities for decisions being made in the name of the League. But don’t slumber too long because January 2005 will be here before you know it. I know that you are not expected to take over officially until the gavel is handed over at the 2005 Annual Meeting, but don’t believe it. Soon after the holidays, Amy may be winded and looking forward to clearing her desk of League unfinished business, which will may then end up on your heaping plate!

Incoming President

Congratulations, Amy! Although you are not yet “official,” I’ll bet you are beginning to ponder the awesomeness of what lies ahead in your presidency. Don’t fret; your official Board is ready to support the vision that you articulate, thereby enhancing your leadership with their collective brand of individual attributes. And don’t forget you have additional help in your Community Advisory Board Liaison Keith Landon; Sustainer Liaison Margaret Nee; Assistant to President Juliet Bianca and Mary Lynch, your Sustaining Advisor. Having been hand-picked by you, they will provide tons of comfort with just the right flavoring of nurturing through it all.

Remember this year is yours to enjoy. But take it all in bite sizes, as swallowing indiscriminately is not advisable. Let your leadership exemplify the legacy that is passed to you through a long line of great women who set the stage for you as you take the reign of this mighty and awesome organization. Let the blocks that you add to that rich legacy, loom with the advancement of the mission of the League. It will be because you are strong, compassionate, intriguing, magnificent, independent, intelligent and powerful. You are our Queen for the year!!!

As a Sustaining Past President, Karen will accept your offer for assistance when asked, but she will have the good grace to stay a safe distance away, if that seems prudent, so you can grow comfortably and successfully in your role as the 81st President of JLM. All Active and Sustaining members, no matter our roles, pledge our support and SALUTE you as we begin this journey together. This time next year, all of us will feel like tipping our hats in your honor.

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Provisional Class Joins the Ranks of Actives

By [Stevie Fay and Leana Marks](#), *Co-Chairs*

The Provisional class has been winding down...March was a busy month, first with hosting the second annual Family Fun Day at Inn Transition South, then with Provisional Commencement. At Family Fun Day, the residents enjoyed games like the egg toss (a bit messy!), musical chairs, face painting, and a bounce house. And to cool things off a bit, everyone had ice cream, compliments of Ben & Jerry’s!

Provisional Commencement was held at the Dadeland Marriott Hotel this year, and we were able to welcome our provisionals as new members! The Provisionals are an incredibly dedicated group of ladies who embody the spirit of what the

Junior League is all about!

Let's all say "Hello" when you see one of these new Actives!!! **Lourdes Abella-Levy, Tillie Borchers, Tania Bredemeier, Pilar Bretos, Carrie Brumbaugh, Carol Bryant, Katie Butler, Kaia Calbeck, Ashley Cesarano, Vanessa Chartouni, Lori Cooperider, Margaret Correoso, Maureen Dawson, Vivian de las Cuevas-Diaz, Cecilia Dubon, Ansley Elfmont, Tyler Emerson, Marlene Fernandez, Sarah Flanagan, Karlee George, Natalee George, Aniella Gonzalez, Peggy Gutierrez, Elizabeth Haransky-Schaaf, Lynn Harris, Tracy Hinsely, Nicole Jacomo, Melissa Johnson, Martha Johnson-Rutledge, Lisa Joseph, Lauren Kahn, Kimberly Kanoff, Jacqueline Kellogg, Allyson Lanahan, Marta Lista, Betty Lopez-Castro, Kasia Maguire, Marilyn Mardini, Isabella Marquez, Michelle Martinez, Kim McCray, Jackie O'Donnell, Barbara Oinkle, Ayana O'Rand, Lisa Ponce, Elisabeth Reid, Austin Rivers, Brooke Roberts-Webb, Amy Robles, Gretchen Rust, Elizabeth Sanchez, Lisa Sayfie, Jenae Schlipman, Saskia Schneikart, Danielle Schoenwetter, Caroline Scornavacca, Barbara Shepard, Sharla Sponhauer, Joan Taylor, Tina Towerly, Samantha Wilson and Jennifer Wolinsky.**

And a special thanks to our Provisional Mentors: Jennifer Ayala, Nickelle Benoit, Jackie Crabill, Sara Dargham, Marylen Exposito, Sharon Maurino, Melanie Mitchell, Allison Simon and Alina Zanetti-Leon, who were the backbone of the Committee!

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Provisionals Party on Family Fun Day at ITS

By [Aniella Gonzalez](#)

After a year of Tuesdays learning about the League, on Saturday, March 13, 2004, the Junior League's provisional members threw a party full of fun, games and food for the 56 families at Inn Transition South (ITS). Helped by the glorious South Florida sun, Family Fun Day was full of activities for children of all ages. The perpetual line at the "Bounce House" was not to be outdone by the conga line for musical chairs. Younger children indulged in face painting, after drawing and coloring away on ITS' sidewalks covered in donated newsprint from the Miami Herald. Shutterbug provisionals snapped Polaroid photographs of each child who then created their own homemade frames. The teenagers hit the basketball court for more athletic pursuits, and some good-hearted competition for prizes, including autographed sports memorabilia.

While all these activities were ongoing, the ITS families lunched on pizza, fruit salad and ice cream sundaes donated and subsidized by Ben & Jerry's, Publix, and Pizza Hut. Family Fun Day provided a great opportunity to meet the ITS families and enjoy an afternoon of "hands on" community service work in the spirit of the League. Thanks to the provisional class and all who contributed in making Family Fun Day a resounding success. Congratulations to our newest members!

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Sustainer News

By [Margaret Nee](#), *Sustainer Liaison*

JLMarvelous Sustainers... Thank you goes to Maggie Blake for hosting the flower arranging lesson. Maggie's gorgeous yard was the perfect setting for over 20 JLM sustainers and actives to participate in a fun-filled morning. Janice and Margaret from Hirni's taught a delightfully entertaining and informative session and all who attended went home with a beautiful arrangement – no two were alike and all were stunning! More pictures are on the Website.

Thank you also goes to Sally Wise for sharing your time and expertise with the women and children at the ITS Library. Your kind smile and professional touch have helped in many ways. Let the reading begin!

Thank you goes to Betsy Tilghman for organizing a day trip to The Garden Club of Palm Beach's annual House and Garden Tour. A most enjoyable day began with a relaxing brunch and culminated with a tour of the breathtaking gardens and stunning homes of our northern neighbors!

Thank yous go to Jill Ecklund, Dana Mortarella and Bonita Whytehead for volunteering at the V-Day event that was held in conjunction with the Women's Fund of Miami at the Gusman Theatre – you helped us deliver a powerful message to a full house!

Looking Ahead

Now that we're approaching the slower pace of summer, it's time to renew and refresh your relationship with the JLM. I would like to invite (and strongly encourage) you to come and volunteer at a community project or to become a Sustaining Advisor for any JLM committee, project or fundraiser. Our new motto: Volunteering at your convenience – no time conflicts, no hassles, just lots of fun! Please take a look at the list of activities on the JLM calendar or contact [Margaret Nee](#).

EVENTS in the WORKS

Please check the website, your email or your home mailbox in the next few weeks for final details about:

- • Cocktail Party
- • Mother's Day Brunch
- • Tea and Tour of the Biltmore
- • Inn Transition South Landscape Project Part II
- • Cooking lesson(s)

Hope to see you at one of our events! I look forward to hearing from you – please remember to send me your news, promotions, ideas and suggestions.. •

Special thanks to Debbie Korge for opening her home for the Sustainers Spring Cocktail Party.

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Meredith Mills... Going Sustaining!!

Listen my actives and we will tell
of the long League service of Meredith Mills
Too long ago for us to recall
She joined the League to benefit all

Not only the women and children at risk
But the active and provisional's woes did she fix

No light shone brighter in the belfry here
No battle found her wanting or lacking in cheer

She brought one if by sea, two if by land,
To every worker she gave light and a hand.
She raised morale as she raised money
She served membership, you bet honey!

Vice President of everything, Chair of the rest
For good hard work she was the best

She welcomed the new and the old alike,
She knew all the ins and outs, and shared what she knew

As she helped us, the League grew.
She encouraged and trained,
She found you a placement
That kept you in the game

She placed us, nominated us, brought us to work
Not a task in the League, but one did she shirk.
We cannot tell you what she refused to consider
No matter how many of us did bid her!

Because of her light and example, women and children much love did sample
The tax cuts are coming, but we are prepared.
She raised our arms to service and dollars to share.

We will miss her sorely in the Active League
But it only seems fair,
Since she sustained us, to let her go there.

We officially declare Meredith Mills a sustainer in the League, with our love and respect.

We will miss you in "Active Leadership", but we know you will never be inactive in service to the women and children of Miami Dade.

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Congratulations to JLM Super Leaguers!

January

- Allison Freeland
Program Development and Planning

February

- Angel Michaels
INN Transition North

March

- Lorriann Martin
Encore Shop Treasurer
- Jennifer Quezada
Women Who Make a Difference Logistics Coordinator

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SUPER HUSBAND

January

- Steven Marks
-

JLM Merchandise Available Online in May

Quality crafted Lands' End

Merchandise with JLM Logo

- **Polo Shirt**
- **Washed Cap**
- **Tote Bag**
- **Beach Towel**

[Order online](#)

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End this League year with a kickoff for next year's Family Literacy project!!

By [Joelle Allen](#), Chair

Junior League of Miami has been working with David Lawrence and the Early Childhood Initiative Foundation for nearly four years to create a signature project in the League's focus area of early childhood education. In March, the general membership approved "Building a Family of Readers" as a community project for 2004-2005. Next year's Committee will provide parenting skills training to families living in domestic violence shelters (ITS and ITN) and families in the dependency court system (Troy Academy).

To celebrate, the Family Literacy and Inn Transition South committees are throwing a Mothers' Day Pajama Party on Saturday, May 8, 2004. Everyone, including JLM volunteers, will be wearing their pajamas! Each child at ITS will receive new pajamas and mothers will receive a new pair of slippers, all donated by JLM members.

Children will participate in crafts and be entertained by storytellers, while the mothers receive approximately an hour of training on "Reading Aloud with Young Children." This training will model effective read-aloud techniques and introduce activities to capture children's attention, encouraging them to become lifelong readers. During lunch, David Lawrence will give a short talk on ensuring that all Miami-Dade's children enter school with the foundation of literacy skills they need to succeed. After a fun filled day, the children will choose their very own book to take home to build their family library.

We hope to see you on May 8th for a very special Mothers' Day celebration! For more information on donating pajamas or volunteering at the event, please contact [Joëlle Allen](#).

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INN TRANSITION NORTH, Grow the Volunteer In You: Give ITN Your Heart!

By [Ruby Nell Johnson and Meg Valls](#)

The Junior League lit the candle of innovative and creative change in its approach to the provision of services to “Families at Risk” particularly those who are victims and survivors of family violence who know first hand the pain and suffering of this criminal and immoral act. This eternal candle has burned with fervor ever since engulfing our membership and communities with a passion so contagious that Miami-Dade County and others have joined in partnership with the League to break the cycle of violence that chips away at the humanity of women and children and the communities in which they reside.

The League’s premier flagship project, known as Inn Transition North, is our vessel of response to this plight of women and children. They are provided a safe home away from home so that supportive services needed to transition them from family violence to a new life filled with nurturing and caring services. And also give self-sufficiency and positive self esteem a chance to take root and grow to its full potential within the families who are being ravaged by violence. To ensure that this philosophy is implemented, it is crucial that each partner rededicate themselves to our residents simply because it’s the right thing to do.

Along with the driving force of our philosophy, we must keep in mind the fact that the physical structure of ITN belongs to the League. Yes, it has lost some of its glitter, because that is what happens during the aging process, but it is ours, and we must make sure that the services we provide are second to none and that we maintain and keep the beauty of the physical structure so that our residents can be proud of their temporary homes. We encourage you to make this placement your first choice! The mothers and their children have an array of issues and problems that are constantly blossoming and blooming, waiting for someone like you to help them cultivate them into beautiful flowers rather than leaving things to chance which could end up as a garden full of weeds.

When we are armed with awareness of family violence issues, compassion, and the knowledge that the cycle can be broken our volunteers can make a difference in the lives of these women and children. Join us!

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Advocacy: The Junior League’s Other Role

By [Vicki Lopez Lukis](#)

The Junior League engages in advocacy on a daily basis. This is an important role, albeit, oftentimes, an understated one. Each time we speak to people about the work that we do we are raising the consciousness and awareness of those around us about our collective mission.

A larger function, however, is the advocacy role we play with our state legislators. In the Fall, our Public Affairs Committee sponsored a legislative delegation reception to introduce and welcome our state senators and representatives. It was during the question and answer portion of our program that I asked how we could be most effective in our advocacy role with respect to the legislature. We were given sage advice that we should not wait until session is underway to plead our cases but rather should be present when the House and Senate were conducting their committee hearings. We learned that most of the budgetary issues are well decided prior to the beginning of the session.

As a historical point, our community project, GAP, was one of the highlighted programs that almost lost their state funding last year in an 11th hour repeal when budgetary constraints forced legislators to forego funding very valuable services in our community. GAP, with the help of many of its supporters including the Junior League of Miami, was successful in restoring their funding. By the time we hosted the legislative session, it was obvious to us all that we needed to be prepared to fight for GAP’s funding in the event similar budgetary problems arose in this year’s legislative session.

We heeded the advice given by the legislators and our community partner representative for the GAP, Eileen Nexer Brown. Eileen and I set off to Tallahassee on February 3 - 4 to advocate all of the pertinent legislators on both sides of the aisle in the House and Senate as well as high level staff at the Department of Juvenile Justice. We also addressed the Women’s Caucus luncheon where we obtained much support for the work we are doing on behalf of the GAP girls.

We took advantage of the attention being placed on juvenile justice – particularly the negative media attention at our own detention center – to focus the issue on the positive impact that GAP was having on the underserved population of juvenile female offenders. For two days we kept GAP’s funding at the forefront of each legislator who could impact the funding. Without exception, each legislator, thanks in part to the strong support of Rep. Gus Barreiro, agreed to support the GAP’s original funding request of \$300,000 as opposed to their historical funding level of \$150,000. There was also a movement to begin discussions of expanding this innovative project throughout the state so that other areas can benefit as well. The legislators thought that other Junior Leagues should mirror our successful partnership and suggested that our League be prepared to train others in the work that we do. When we departed, we felt relieved that we had been proactive during committee sessions when it counted most.

Then Andria Hanley, President-Elect, and I traveled to Tallahassee on March 30-31 to participate in the spring conference of the State Public Affairs Committee (SPAC). This committee is made up of all of the Leagues throughout Florida whose voting delegates decide during the Summer what statewide issues need to be brought to the attention of the state legislators

during session. We paid visits to members of our delegation reminding them of the great community work that we are doing and thanked them for their continued support. The work of SPAC has left a positive imprint on the legislature as was obvious during our meetings in February and March. The Junior Leagues are well respected and much attention is paid to our issues because of the serious commitment demonstrated in our individual communities.

During SPAC we were able to raise the issue of juvenile justice to the other Leagues hoping we can make this a statewide issue in next year's agenda. It is clear that the JLM is poised to take a leadership role in juvenile justice issues and through its advocacy, both locally and statewide, will be able to make a huge difference and leave a legacy much like we have with our work in domestic violence.

Advocacy is a terrific way of giving voice to those we serve and each one of us should be encouraged to join the efforts of our League to educate and bring about the many changes required to make the lives of those we serve that much better.

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UM Squad Cheers On GAP Girls

By [Vicki Lopez Lukis](#)

What happens when a group of University of Miami Cheerleaders meets up with GAP girls? The answer – a miracle. On April 1, Heather Almaguer, a Super Leaguer in her own right and the coach of the UM Cheerleaders, arranged to have six of her squad members share a bit of “spirit” with the GAP girls detained at the Miami-Dade Juvenile Detention Center. Arriving in the UM van and armed with green and orange pom-poms, these extraordinary young college women taught every one of us, themselves and detention staff included, a very valuable lesson about the positive affects of mentoring.

As we walked into MOD 11's housing unit, the girls' faces lit up as they watched with awe as the cheerleaders entered dressed in full UM uniform. The evening began with the female circle of celebration where each of the committee members and guests sat among the GAP girls while introductions were made. Each person shared the essence they brought to the evening, which in this case was most often happiness. While everyone feasted on pizza and sodas, the UM cheerleaders took time to get to know the GAP girl seated next to her. There was a genuine exchange of topics familiar to all young women.

Then the cheerleaders kicked into gear by introducing several cheers and dances. Not one of the GAP girls remained seated and each one of them followed closely the cheerleader nearest to her. What developed was truly inspirational! The lines of socio-economic division began to blur and each participant in this evening became like one. From the perspective of an outsider, anyone would have thought that they walked into a cheerleading Summer camp. What was even more amazing was to see the amount of talent exhibited by the GAP girls. They were animated and engaged and for several hours were able to escape their harsh and unpleasant reality. At the end of the evening, the cheerleaders autographed a poster of the group for each girl and then did the unimaginable – they donated their green and orange pom-poms to the girls!

During the reflection portion of the evening right after the cheerleaders had left but not before many thank yous and hugs of gratitude were expressed, one GAP girl reported that she had learned she was indeed very talented. Most of them walked away wanting to be a cheerleader upon return to her high school. But more importantly, they learned that anything is possible if you just do it. They saw the camaraderie of the squad and now know that positive activities can lead to positive and supportive friendships. This lesson was very new to many of the girls and will serve them well in their future endeavors.

The UM Cheerleading squad brought joy and happiness to girls whose lives couldn't be farther from theirs. Yet their compassion and dedication to community service brought great “cheer” to an often sad and dark place. As is always the case when someone visits the GAP girls, Heather reported that the evening had impacted the cheerleaders in many positive ways. They were truly moved by these GAP girls and promised to return again next year.

Junior League is fortunate to count Heather as a tireless active. The GAP committee thanks her for creating this unique and special partnership with UM.

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Hurwit Crisis Nursery

By [Ashley Cusack and Morgan Smith](#)

The Hurwit Crisis Nursery (HCN) has proven to be a wonderful and fulfilling committee for the Junior League. The HCN is a home for children between the ages of newborn to 12 years old who are between foster homes. The children stay at the home an average of two months.

Our committee enjoys planning and participating in a special event each month for the children. In March we spent a wonderful day at the Miami Seaquarium and were able to have the children pet and feed the dolphins. It was such a thrill to watch their faces (and ours!). They especially loved getting splashed by Lolita, the killer whale!

The younger children that cannot go on the field trip stay at the nursery, where half the committee plans activities for them and the babies get the rare chance to be held and doted on.

To date we have been able to take these wonderful children ice skating, horse back riding, to the Miami Children's Museum, to the Seaquarium and to an IMAX movie. If you are interested in joining the committee for this extremely rewarding project, please contact [Ashley Cusack, or Morgan Smith](#).

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All Aboard Story Hour

By [Hillary Scurtis and Tina Boresow](#), *Co-Chairs*

All Aboard Story Hour is in its final season with Junior League. We have had a lovely year with the children at ITS, ITN and Community Partnership for the Homeless. The children have been very receptive to the story hour and crafts and adore the free book they receive at the end of the session. However, there is a HUGE need for volunteers at ITS for May 27th from 6:30 pm- 7:30 pm. What a wonderful opportunity to get your hand in two community projects, both Inn Transition South and All Aboard Story Hour. If you have not seen the new facility and can spare ONE hour with the children please call either [Hillary Scurtis or Tina Boresow](#).

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BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS Project Reach

By [Kristin Wherry](#), *Chair*

The JLM committee that supports Project Reach is winding down a fantastic year of activities and outings for the Big Brothers-Big Sisters community program. We have enjoyed committee-planned outings that include ice skating, Miami Heat basketball games, Everglades tour, the Ballet, interactive cooking class, Miami Children's Museum, the Circus, a variety of BBBS annual events, and much more.

JLM kindly supported our bid to continue Project Reach for another year in 2004-2005, and we are excited about planning the outings that offer educational, mentoring and fun activities for the kids and committee.

I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to each committee member that supported Project Reach this year. Our committee embodies the true community spirit that JLM seeks to provide our projects. It has been my pleasure to serve as chair and I look forward to participating next year.

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Community Advisory Board

By [Keith Landon](#), *VP Communications*

We would like to thank all of the Community Advisory Board members that have spoken to our members at various events throughout the year. We have had a great year and look forward to having the CAB members even more involved next year.

If you have any suggestions please email the new CAB Liaison, [Keith Landon](#).

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2004-2005 Projects & Fundraisers Community Projects

By [Karen Clement and Allison Freeland](#)

The Program Development committee wishes to thank all of you who participated in project selection for the 2004-2005 League Year. Whether you recruited a new project, attended the Project presentations, called with feedback or attended the voting meeting your input was invaluable. This year's change to Project Presentations at a General Membership meeting gave many of you the opportunity to hear directly from the agencies before voting; we hope you found it beneficial.

While there are so many needs in our community, the committee worked diligently to narrow down selections to those that targeted our focus areas and would provide a meaningful placement for our members. We hope you'll consider these many options when deciding on your placements for next year. We are pleased to share with you the following projects that have been approved by the General Membership for 2004-2005:

Big Brothers Big Sisters – 5 to 12 volunteers and \$7,000. Due to popular demand, Project Reach will continue for its fourth year. Volunteers will plan and participate in recreational and educational outings with children who are on a waiting list for a permanent match with BBBS.

CHARLEE – 12 Volunteers approved. In its 2nd year, volunteers will work with the girls at Gladstone Center to plan and participate in 3 programs: Creative Expressions (art), Conduct and Etiquette 101 and Planting Seeds of Hope (gardening).

Early Childhood Initiative Foundation – 12 to 15 volunteers and \$7,500. This new project will promote the value of family literacy through its Shared Beginnings Program. Volunteers will be trained in early literacy strategies and will pilot the program in several sites around Miami.

Family Resource Center – 5 to 10 volunteers and \$5,000 for the Hurwit Crisis Nursery. The nursery is an emergency shelter program for 44 abused and neglected children ages newborn through 12. Volunteers will plan and implement field trips for the children. Others will remain at the nursery with those too young to attend the field trips.

Foster Care Review – 12 volunteers and \$4,000 in funding. Volunteers will assist in collecting information from foster parents to help case managers prepare for hearings. An additional component will be added this year that will help FCR determine what additional support is needed for foster parents.

Girls Advocacy Project (GAP) – 10 to 15 volunteers and \$6,400. Popularly known as GAP, this project will continue on for a fourth year. Volunteers will schedule and oversee speaker programs for girls in Juvenile Detention Center. Topics include fitness, health, parenting, drug awareness, job skills and life skills.

Inn Transition North – 25 volunteers and \$12,000. Returning for its 14th year of a 20 year commitment, our flagship project continues to help women and children recover from the effects of domestic violence through mentoring and life skills training. Volunteers will serve as mentors and coordinate monthly events for residents.

Inn Transition South – 25 to 40 volunteers and \$24,000. ITS mirrors our highly successful project in the North. This 56 unit apartment complex in South Dade serves victims of domestic violence and homelessness. Volunteers will serve as mentors to the residents and plan monthly life skills events. •

Fundraisers

- Nordstrom Grand Opening Gala at Dadeland, Nov. 10th. A strolling party and shopping event to celebrate the opening of Nordstrom's newest store benefiting the Junior League of Miami and others.
- Community Partners
- Women Who Make a Difference Luncheon
- Golf Outing Tournament
- Chili in the Village

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Molly Member Spotlight

By [Keith Landon](#), VP Communications

This is the third in a series of spotlights featuring active members of the Junior League of Miami.

Neca Logan has been an active member in our Junior League since 2001; and, even though she is a South Florida native, has enjoyed her years in JLM learning more about Miami and its community. Her placement this year has been working on the Hurwit Family Resource Center. This is her first community-based placement since joining JLM and she is really enjoying it very much. In her words, "It's so great to see the kids and make a small difference in their lives. I'll choose this [placement] again, that's how much I like it." She has previously served on the Meetings/Hospitality committee and the Placement committee as an area advisor. Neca enjoyed both of these, and especially enjoyed connecting with folks who live and work in her area of town – Bal Harbour. She thinks our area meetings are wonderful ways to connect with neighbors and colleagues.

A busy professional working in the publishing world, Neca still enjoys making the time for her JLM commitments. She thinks that volunteering through the Junior League is wonderful, as each year offers a new chance to choose a placement that works for whatever stage of life you happen to be experiencing. As the Director of Professional Publishing and Conferencing for Health Communications, Inc. (HCI), Neca has to basically run her publication, Counselor. The publication is written for the front-line counselors and therapists who work with individuals with drug and/or alcohol addiction.

Her responsibilities include obtaining the advertising for her publication; the circulation; the business aspects of the publication; and the marketing and trade shows for the publication. In her fifth year at HCI, Neca also enjoys managing and recruiting interns for the editorial and business departments of the magazine! Neca's employer HCI is best known as the publishers of such life issues books as Chicken Soup for the Soul. They have been in business for 25 years, and their entire operations are completely self-contained from graphics to editorial to printing and shipping, which, according to Neca is "really awesome. We can print two million books a month here." She works in Deerfield Beach, so, in her words, anything

south is not for her. JLM has allowed Neca lots of opportunities to volunteer near her home and her job, which she loves.

In all her spare time, Neca has lots of hobbies. She enjoys yoga, playing golf, swimming, going to the beach and snow skiing!!! Whew! As a native South Floridian, she enjoyed all 12 years of schooling at Carrolton and then headed west to University of Colorado (guess that's where the ski skills come in!). She also holds an MBA from Barry University. She admits to joining the League much later than many of her peers, and laughs now that she is in the "little" League and they are all sustainers! She also enjoys spending time with another JLM-er, Debbie Radosevich. They are both avid rowers, and used to be the stern pair of an 8-plus; now they have been enjoying new boating adventures rowing in singles and other boats, just for fun! It's hard to imagine that Neca can find the time to do all the wonderful things that she does! Many thanks to Neca for her insight and views into her JLM experience! •

A special thank you to all our Molly Members this year – Molly Osendorf, Angela Harrison & Neca Logan!

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A Salute to 2003-2004 Community Partners

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