



ANNUAL REPORT **2024-2025**

*Honored to serve
the greater Grand Rapids community
for 100 years!*

OUR MISSION

The Junior League of Grand Rapids is an organization of women whose mission is to advance women's leadership for meaningful community impact through volunteer action, collaboration, and training.

OUR VISION

The Junior League: Women Around the World as Catalysts for Lasting Community Change.

OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The Junior League welcomes all women who value our Mission. We are committed to inclusive environments of diverse individuals, organizations, and communities.

ASSOCIATION PURPOSE

The purpose of The Association of Junior League International, Inc. is to add value to its member Leagues in their fulfillment of The Junior League Mission.

ABOUT THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Founded in 1925, the Junior League of Grand Rapids (JLGR) is a nonprofit organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving the community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers.

For a century, JLGR has been a catalyst for change in West Michigan mobilizing women to lead with purpose, compassion, and courage. From building playgrounds that promote wellness to supporting workforce readiness programs and advancing childhood health initiatives, JLGR members have consistently responded to the evolving needs of our community with creativity and conviction.

As a member League of The Association of Junior Leagues International, Inc. (AJLI), JLGR benefits from shared resources, leadership development, and a powerful network of over 125,000 women across four countries. Together, we amplify our impact and uphold a legacy of civic leadership that began in New York City in 1901.

JLGR is proud to be part of one of the largest and most effective volunteer organizations in the world. Our members are thought leaders, changemakers, and advocates working at the forefront of social reform to build a more equitable, vibrant Grand Rapids.

JLGR is a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit organization. Our programs and initiatives are made possible through member dues, individual and corporate donations, foundation support, and fundraising events.

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear JLGR Members, Supporters, and Friends,

What a year! The League had such a wonderful time celebrating our 100th anniversary, reminiscing with all of you about the incredible impact our organization has had on Grand Rapids. We kicked off the year with a 100-year celebration in conjunction with our second annual Find the Good Day, and wrapped with a Great Gatsby-themed gala, our annual volunteer blitz, and our final General Membership Meeting, where we recognized all of the efforts and dedication of our members.

In our 100th year, the League continued the momentum that had been put into motion in our 99th year - including our continued partnership with the Women's Resource Center. We also doubled the number of community service events through volunteer opportunities with our legacy partner organizations such as the YWCA, Ronald McDonald House, and Kids' Food Basket.

The committees were dedicated to researching and making recommendations to the board of directors regarding a third fundraiser for our organization, as well as a homegrown community impact project. Stay tuned for more on this!

Our membership also saw positive momentum as women looked to join and re-engage with our organization. We launched a new website, and our General Membership Meetings, where we provide trainings aligned with our mission of developing women, had record attendance each month. It was evident that women in our community are seeking the connection and development our organization uniquely brings.

Here's to the next 100 years! I cannot wait to see the continued shaping of Grand Rapids as the beautiful community it is, due to the vision and dedication of this outstanding organization. And remember... the work of the Junior League of Grand Rapids - is never done.

Anne Marie Hillary
100th President
Junior League of Grand Rapids



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Anne Marie
Hillary**
President



AJ Wilkes
President
Elect



**Melisa
Schut**
VP Finance



Mabel Heitmeier
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**Kristin
Georgelos**
VP Community
Impact



Jennifer Vacanti
VP Membership
Development



**Tarra
Geertman**
VP Fund
Development



Julie Allen
VP New Member
Development



Theresa Osmer
Secretary /
Parliamentarian



Carroll Velie
Sustainer
Representative
(Voting)



Rachel Siglow
Sustainer
Representative

LEAGUE LEADERS

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| 100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY CHAIR | Shannon Brady |
| COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR | Haley Vos |
| COMMUNITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE CHAIR | Erica Powell |
| EDUCATION & ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE CHAIR | Kelsey Marr |
| FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR | Melisa Schut |
| GALA CO-CHAIR | Allison Douglas |
| GALA CO-CHAIR | Meghan Boss |
| LUNCHEON COMMITTEE CHAIR | Alisa Pearson |
| MEMBER CONNECTIONS CO-CHAIR | Hillary Hatch |
| MEMBER CONNECTIONS CO-CHAIR | Tessa Muir |
| NOMINATING & PLACEMENT CHAIR | Julie Blaszak |
| NEW MEMBER CHAIR | Hannah Beth Boersma |
| STATEWIDE PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE CHAIR | Erika Kowall |
| WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER COMMITTEE CHAIR | Carolina Rayzel |

2024-2025 LEADERSHIP AWARD WINNERS



Mary Harriman Active Member of the Year: *Heather Worsfold*

A driving force behind the League's success this year, Heather played a pivotal role in the transition to our new website and operating system as the League's Webmaster. Her dependability and commitment continue to shape our League in immeasurable ways as she also held two additional placements during the year, serving on the Member Recruitment and Nominating & Placement committees.



Edith Blodgett New Member of the Year: *Emie Badersnider*

Fully embracing her new member year, Emie went above and beyond with enthusiasm and commitment. In addition to achieving all of her requirements, she secured sponsorships and recruited friends to join JLGR. Emie's presence at League meetings and social events was a testament to her dedication and her commitment to making the most of her Junior League experience.



Betty Ford Sustainer of the Year: *Carroll Velie*

Carroll's expertise, network, and passion made a tangible difference as she championed our strategic priorities (including fundraising and membership). She used her connections among Sustainers to successfully recruit several back into the League and inspired others to get involved in ways they may not have considered.

MEMBERS OF THE MONTH

Michele Adams

Julie Blaszak

Julie Hamlet

Courtney Landreth

Erika Kowall

Mary Beth Permoda

Angie Pope

Kala Pozivilko

Stefanie Snyder

Haley Vos

Heather Worsfold



2024-2025 HIGHLIGHTS



300 members strong in our 100th year of Developing Women Leaders for meaningful community impact in Grand Rapids



9 legacy community partners collaborated in honor of the Junior League of Grand Rapids' centennial year



300 hours of volunteer service achieved in addition to training and development activities



~1,000 items collected to support community partners



\$129,000 raised to support our mission and community programs

KICKING OFF 100 YEARS OF IMPACT AT MULICK PARK

On Thursday, September 19, Junior League of Grand Rapids members, community partners, and friends gathered at Mulick Park to celebrate the second annual *Find the Good Day* and reflect on the League's century of impact in our community. As the site of one of JLGR's signature Wellness Adventure Yards, the park provided a meaningful backdrop to honor the League's legacy and inspire the next generation of women leaders.

The event fostered connection, celebration, and shared purpose. As part of the gathering, and to honor our five decade long partnership with the YWCA, the League hosted a pantry drive benefiting the YWCA Sojourner House. Volunteers collected bags of food and household goods to support families experiencing hardship.

Grand Rapids Mayor Rosalynn Bliss presented a proclamation declaring the third Thursday of September as *Find the Good Day* in Grand Rapids. This moment was a highlight of the event and a testament to the Junior League's positive impact in our community.

To kick off our 100th year, the event served as a reflection of our enduring spirit of women coming together to do good, and our legacy of kindness, empowerment, and community transformation.



JLGR IMPACT

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH VOLUNTEER ACTION & COLLABORATION

WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

In a renewed partnership with the Women's Resource Center (WRC), the Junior League of Grand Rapids supported programs designed to help women re-enter the workforce with confidence and dignity.



JLGR members contributed their time and expertise by conducting mock interviews, reviewing résumés, and assisting in the operation of the WRC Business Boutique store, which provides professional attire to women preparing for job opportunities. This hands-on engagement helped equip WRC participants with essential tools to advance their employment goals.



DONE IN A MEETING

Throughout the year, JLGR members supported our community partners at the YWCA, Kids' Food Basket (pictured left), Gilda's Club Grand Rapids, and Artists Creating Together through Done In A Meeting (DIAM) activities. From product drives and collections, to meaningful acts of service, these DIAMs remind us that even small gestures can make a lasting impact.

DONE IN A DAY

Through Done In A Day (DIAD) activities, members provided volunteer services to legacy partners across our community including setting up for Gilda's Club annual Noogiefest. In total, members contributed hundreds of hours of support to organizations across our community.



COLLABORATION



COMMITMENT TO TRAINING

The Junior League of Grand Rapids remains deeply committed to training our members, focusing on the development of women as effective leaders and volunteers through structured programs and training - including monthly General Membership Meetings, virtual workshops, and leadership trainings from AJLI.

JLGR GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Monthly General Membership Meetings (GMMs) provide JLGR a platform to educate members on community needs, updates on League initiatives, and offer training and leadership development. Expertise from community guest speakers are often a highlight of these meetings, and a way to keep members informed and engaged in the mission of improving communities through trained volunteers.



AJLI ADVOCACY INSTITUTE

In November 2024, JLGR Members Melisa Schut and Angie Pope traveled to Chicago to participate in the newly reinstated Advocacy and Leadership Institute. There was a focus on skills for effective advocacy and working within the political system to drive lasting change that aligns with our organization's goals (including building compelling public awareness campaigns and effective lobbying techniques).

AJLI ANNUAL CONFERENCE

In May 2025, President-Elect AJ Wilkes and President Anne Marie Hillary attended the annual conference of the Association of Junior Leagues International in Orlando, where they participated in business meetings, workshops, networking, and leadership training. This event brings together hundreds of women from around the world to empower leadership, share best practices, and focus on community impact.



TRAINING



LEAD THE WAY LUNCHEON

The 9th Annual Lead the Way Luncheon was held on October 8, 2024 at Kent Country Club and brought together members, partners, and community leaders to further women's leadership and JLGR's mission-driven work.



The event featured remarks from past President Catherine Behrendt and Women's Resource Center CEO Trudy Ender, who emphasized the importance of women-led solutions and collaborative community impact. A lighthearted moment was shared when the League's 50th President, Judy Frey, joined President Anne Marie Hillary on stage to honor the League's history and energize attendees.



100TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

On Friday, April 25, 2025, the Junior League of Grand Rapids hosted its 9th Annual Gala. It was an unforgettable evening that paid tribute to our centennial year with a dazzling 1920s Great Gatsby-inspired celebration.

The dazzling evening of inspiration at the Grand Rapids Art Museum honored the League's 100 year legacy of meaningful impact on Grand Rapids with the premier of JLGR's centennial documentary. Guests celebrated this remarkable milestone with live music and dancing.

The highlight of the evening was the unified dedication of attendees to the League's mission and the development of the next century of women leaders in Grand Rapids.



Thanks to the generosity of sponsors, donors, community partners, friends, and supporters, both the 2024 Lead the Way Luncheon and 100th Anniversary Gala were a resounding success. We strengthened relationships and renewed our commitment to the League's mission: continuing our investment in the advancement of women's leadership for meaningful and lasting community change.

FUNDRAISING

HOW TO GET INVOLVED



JOIN

Are you passionate about volunteerism, leadership, and making a difference?

JLGR welcomes women who are looking to grow, give back, and help build a better Grand Rapids.

SUPPORT

Make an impact by supporting JLGR through:

- Individual or corporate gifts
- Sponsorships
- Attend fundraising events

Your generosity fuels our mission

PARTNER

JLGR is proud to collaborate with local organizations to create lasting change. We're always seeking mission-aligned partners to amplify our impact.

Let's build a stronger community - together



SCAN TO LEARN MORE

CONTACT US

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