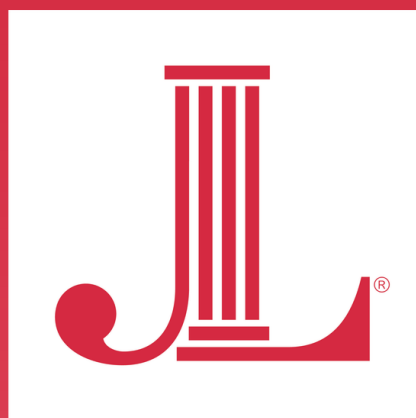




JUNIOR LEAGUE **GRAND RAPIDS**

2025 - 2026

ANNUAL REPORT

*Honored to serve
The Greater Grand Rapids community
for 101 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.

OUR CORE VALUES

The Junior League is grounded in core values that guide our purpose, our partnerships, and our work in communities: collaboration, community, diversity, empowerment, leadership, respect, and service.

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 100 years, JLGR has been a catalyst for change in West Michigan, mobilizing women to lead with purpose and respond to the evolving needs of the community. From building playgrounds that promote wellness to supporting workforce readiness and childhood health initiatives, JLGR has made a lasting impact through volunteer leadership.

As a member of The Association of Junior Leagues International, Inc. (AJLI), JLGR is part of a global network of women dedicated to community impact and civic leadership.



JLGR is a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit organization supported by member dues, individual and corporate donations, foundation grants, and fundraising events.

MISSION



A Letter From our President

Friends, Members, and Supporters,

Community and membership remain at the heart of the Junior League of Grand Rapids. For more than 100 years, women in our League have come together to lead, serve, and strengthen communities throughout Grand Rapids and beyond. As we begin our second century of service, we remain steadfast in our mission to advance women's leadership for meaningful community impact.

As we reflect on the past year, we do so with immense gratitude and pride. The impact we make is not the result of a single event or accomplishment, but rather the collective efforts of our members who generously give their time, talents, and passion in service to others.

This year, we expanded our reach across West Michigan. Our members invested more hours in service, collected more items to support our community partners, and welcomed four new partner organizations into our network. By joining the Training Collaborative of Junior Leagues, members gained access to more than 65 additional training opportunities, supporting leadership development at every stage of the League journey. We were also excited to welcome 14 new members to the Junior League movement and look forward to the talents and leadership they will bring in the years ahead.

This year also marked an important milestone with the announcement of JL CARES, our new signature initiative focused on addressing period poverty in West Michigan. This initiative reflects our commitment to identifying community needs and mobilizing women to create lasting change through service, education, and advocacy.

While we celebrate the accomplishments of the past year, we also look ahead with optimism and purpose. The needs of our community continue to evolve, and so will we. Guided by our mission and inspired by our members, we remain committed to developing the next generation of women leaders and strengthening the community we serve.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the enduring legacy of the Junior League of Grand Rapids. Together, we are building upon a century of service and carrying our mission forward for generations to come.

With Gratitude,
AJ Wilkes
101st President



2025 - 2026

Board of Directors



AJ Wilkes
President



Melisa Schut
President Elect



Alisa Pearson
VP Finance



Kelsey Marr
VP Communications



Erica Powell
VP Community
Impact



Jennifer Vacanti
VP Member
Engagement



Tarra Geertman
VP Fund
Development



Julie Allen
VP New Member
Development



Theresa Osmer
Secretary /
Parliamentarian



Rachel Siglow
Sustainer
Representative
(Voting)



Marcia Love
Sustainer
Representative



2025 - 2026

League Leaders

Active & Sustainer Relations Co-Chair	Lindsey Norg
Active & Sustainer Relations Co-Chair	Amanda Miscisin
Communication Chair	Lauren Mills
Webmaster & Newsblast Editor Chair	Heather Worsfold
Social Media Chair	Aaryn Jewell
Community Outreach Co-Chair (Partnerships)	Hillary Hatch
Community Outreach Co-Chair (Community Outreach)	Stephanie Weir
Donor Cultivation Co-Chair (Luncheon)	Emie Badersnider
Donor Cultivation Co-Chair (Donor)	Stephanie Snyder
Gala Co-Chair	Allison Douglas
Gala Co-Chair	Meghan Boss
New Member Engagement Co-Chair (Recruitment)	Meghan Hunt
New Member Engagement Co-Chair (Training)	Tina Read
Nominating & Placement Chair	Julia Krupansky
Public Affairs & Advocacy Chair	Angie Pope



2025 - 2026

Leadership Award Winners

Jacquelyn Zeman
Edith Blodgett New
Member of the Year



Recognized for her fresh ideas, enthusiasm, and commitment to embracing the mission and purpose of JLGR..

Hillary Hatch
Mary Harriman
Member of the Year



Recognized for her leadership, collaboration, and impact in advancing our mission through dedication to volunteerism and community outreach.

Marcia Love
Betty Ford Sustainer
of the Year



Honored for her dedication, leadership, and lasting impact on JLGR and the Greater Grand Rapids community.

Tarra Geertman
Nellie Clements Presidents Award



Presented to a member who has exemplified growth as a leader and outstanding support of the mission. Tarra has earned the inaugural recipient of this award.

Community Outreach
Committee of the Year



Honored for outstanding teamwork, innovation, and meaningful impact throughout the year. Thank you Hillary Hatch, Stephanie Weir, Kristin Georgelos, Andrea Swintal, Jennifer Quigley, Caroline Malakelis, Denise Hillen, Carolina Rayzel, Jen Verhagen.

Members of the Month

Allison Bandeen
Amanda Hirt
Amanda Miscisin

Emie Badersnider
Heather Mojzak
Kala Pozivilko

Karrie Gumina
Kristin Georgelos
Leigh Mast

Meghan Hunt
Stephanie Weir



Highlights & Key Updates

This year was marked by meaningful engagement, strong community partnerships, and a continued commitment to service. As we entered our 101st year, Junior League of Grand Rapids members came together to support local organizations, contribute thousands of volunteer hours, and advance initiatives that strengthen our community. The highlights below reflect the collective impact of our members and partners throughout the year.

Total Members



63

Women Strong

Money Raised



\$92,260

To Support Our Mission

Volunteer Hours



275

Hours

Community Support



550

Items Collected



Empowering Women Through Volunteer Action & Collaboration

YWCA

Our partnership with the YWCA of West Central Michigan demonstrates the impact of meeting community needs through lasting collaboration. Junior League of Grand Rapids members donated 99 bras and 63 pairs of underwear after identifying an urgent need, partnered with the YWCA during ArtPrize, prepared Thanksgiving dinner for Sojourner House residents, and hosted our annual gingerbread decorating celebration for families.

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This partnership continues to grow as the YWCA becomes the inaugural community partner for JL CARES, our Signature Initiative to end period poverty, expanding access to essential menstrual products for women and girls across West Michigan.



Done In A Meeting

Throughout the year, JLGR members supported our community partners (such as Grand Rapids Public Schools - pictured left) through 8 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 and a day with Paws with a Cause (pictured to the right). In total, members contributed hundreds of hours of support to organizations across our community through over 25 DIAD events.

COLLABORATION



Commitment to Training & Advocacy

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 training sessions from AJLI.

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.

Mid-Year Leadership Retreat

On January 10, 2026, JLGR board members, committee chairs, and incoming leaders gathered at Blythefield Country Club for the Mid-Year Leadership Retreat. The morning offered space to reflect on progress, strengthen collaboration, and align priorities for the remainder of the League year. The session helped train and equip leaders with clarity and renewed momentum as they continued advancing JLGR's mission.



Annual Day At The Capitol

On March 25, JLGR members joined Junior Leagues from across Michigan in Lansing for the annual Day at the Capitol, organized by the Junior Leagues of Michigan State Public Affairs Committee.

Led by our PAAC Chair Angie Pope, our members met with state representatives to discuss Michigan's Human Trafficking Bipartisan Bill Package, which is critical legislation that strengthens protections for survivors and closes gaps in current law.



TRAINING



Lead The Way Luncheon

The 10th Annual Lead the Way Luncheon brought together community members and supporters to learn how the Junior League of Grand Rapids advances women's leadership through volunteer action, collaboration, and training. The event featured a fireside chat with longtime Junior League Sustaining Member, Meg Goebel, who shared insights on leveraging leadership potential and creating meaningful community impact while inspiring attendees to get involved in the League's mission.



Annual Gala | A Spring Soiree



The 2026 Gala brought members, partners, and supporters together at New Vintage Place for an elegant evening featuring a cocktail hour, Silent Auction, paddle raise, seated dinner, and live music from Twice the Action. The event captured the spirit of celebration and philanthropy that defines the JLGR.

A highlight of the evening was the unveiling of JLGR's new signature initiative, JL CARES, marking a bold and future-focused investment in strengthening our impact across the Grand Rapids community.

The gala served as both a celebration of our ongoing work and a catalyst for the year ahead. Generous participation and shared purpose helped deepen engagement, elevate awareness, and move our mission forward.



Thanks to the generosity of sponsors, donors, community partners, friends, and supporters, both the 2025 Lead the Way Luncheon and 10th Annual 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



Launch of JL CARES

At the 10th Annual Gala on May 1, the Junior League of Grand Rapids announced the launch of JL Cares, a new signature initiative focused on reducing period poverty in West Michigan. The initiative grew from a year of listening, research, and collaboration with community partners, revealing the significant and often overlooked impact of limited access to menstrual products on women, girls, and families.

JLGR introduced JL Cares as a multifaceted effort centered on education, awareness, product distribution, and advocacy. This spring, the League provided 550 discreet period product kits to 5th grade students in Grand Rapids Public Schools – an early step in what will become a sustained, community-driven program.

The initiative will formally launch in September 2026 through a pilot partnership with the YWCA West Central Michigan, allowing JLGR to refine distribution and better understand community needs. JL Cares represents the League's next bold investment in improving the lives of women and children and reflects JLGR's enduring commitment to meaningful, responsive impact in Grand Rapids.



CARES

CYCLES • ACCESS • RESOURCES • EQUITY • SUPPORT

An Initiative of Junior League Grand Rapids





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, or 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



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