

# **Junior Leagues of Florida 2009 Legislative Priorities**

## **Priority #1: Foster Care**

**Preserve the funding of effective programs designed to prepare foster and former foster youth to mature into independent adults who contribute to society in a positive manner.**

*Why?*

In 2007, Federal and State funds totaling nearly \$27 Million were allocated for Florida's Transitional Independent Living and Road to Independence programs, both of which are designed to prepare foster and former foster youth to mature into independent adults who contribute to society in a positive manner. These programs continue to fall short of meeting the need as former foster youth struggle more than any other population with underemployment, lack of education, unwanted pregnancy, and incarceration as the following numbers tell:

- *One in four will be incarcerated within the first two years after they leave the system*
- *Over one-fifth will become homeless at some time after age 18*
- *Only 58% obtain a high school degree at age 19 in contrast to the State high school graduation rate of 70%*
- *Less than 3% earn college degrees by the age of 25*
- *Approximately 38 percent are employed 12-18 months after leaving foster care*
- *More than one third suffer emotional disturbances*
- *Between 40-60% of young women become pregnant within 12 to 18 months after leaving foster care*

*(Connected by 25 Report, 2005 and Casey Family Programs Report, 2005)*

## **Priority #2: Booster Seats**

**Enact legislation that requires a child aged 4-7 years old to be in an age appropriate child restraint system while riding in a passenger car.**

*Why?*

- *Children who are appropriately restrained are 28% less likely to die in motor vehicle crashes (The Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, 2006)*
- *Children using booster seats are 59% less likely to be injured than children using seatbelts alone (Journal of the American Medical Association, 2003)*
- *Children in seatbelts alone are 4 to 5 times more likely to receive head injuries (Pediatrics, 2002)*
- *Children in seatbelts alone are 3 times more likely to sustain abdominal injuries. (Annals of Surgery 2004)*

## **Priority #3: Girls' Advocacy Project (GAP)**

**Continue funding the Girls Advocacy Project programs (within the Department of Juvenile Justice budget) in Miami-Dade, Orange and Palm Beach counties of this successful direct intervention service program for girls in Florida's juvenile detention centers.**

*Why?*

- *Florida leads the nation in locking up girls*
- *Girls make up the fastest growing segment of Florida's juvenile justice system*
- *Girls are sent to lock-up facilities because local intervention and treatment services are unavailable*
- *Girls require gender specific programming because their needs are different than boys and they are more likely to end up involved with the juvenile justice system as a means to escape abusive home environments.*

## Our Mission

The Junior Leagues are organizations of women committed to promoting volunteerism, developing the potential of women, and improving the communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Our purpose is exclusively educational and charitable.

## HISTORY OF THE JUNIOR LEAGUE

The Junior League was founded in 1901 by Mary Harriman in New York City and totaled 80 members. Today, the Association of Junior Leagues International is comprised of 294 Junior Leagues throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Great Britain representing more than 171,000 members. The Junior League has been the driving force behind the kinds of initiatives and institutions that make communities healthier places to live: childhood immunizations, family literacy, women's shelters, children's museums, historic preservation, leadership development, and more.

## HISTORY OF THE JUNIOR LEAGUES OF FLORIDA STATE PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Also known as SPAC, the Junior Leagues of Florida State Public Affairs Committee has been the advocacy arm for the 24 Junior Leagues throughout Florida for over 30 years. The group monitors the state legislative process and addresses issues of political importance to the members of the Junior Leagues. Each member of SPAC sends delegates to meetings and conferences throughout the year to research and debate issues of the day. Currently, there are over 11,000 Junior League members in Florida.

## JUNIOR LEAGUES OF FLORIDA STATE PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

c/o Junior League of Boca Raton  
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## 2008-2009 STATE PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

### *Executive Committee*

Dorothy MacDiarmid, <i>Chair</i>	Junior League of Boca Raton
Jenay Iurato, Chair-elect	Junior League of Tampa
Becker Holland	Junior League of Gainesville
Julia Irvin	Junior League of South Brevard
Kristin Calder	Junior League of Boca Raton
Noemi Coltea	Junior League of the Palm Beaches
Barda Kosovrasti	Junior League of Orlando
Charlotte Mather	Junior League of Greater Ft. Lauderdale

## JUNIOR LEAGUES OF FLORIDA

Boca Raton	Sarasota
Central/North Brevard	South Brevard
Clearwater/ Dunedin	St. Petersburg
Daytona Beach	Tallahassee
Emerald Coast	Tampa
Fort Lauderdale	Winter Haven
Fort Myers	
Gainesville	
Indian River	
Jacksonville	
Greater Lakeland	
Manatee County*	
Martin County *	
Miami *	
Ocala *	
Orlando	
Palm Beaches	
Pensacola	

*\*Not a voting member of the State Public Affairs Committee*

