



SPAC CONFERENCE
Summary
October 10-12, 2008
STAYING AFLOAT
with a sinking budget.

Friday, October 10, 2008

6:30-8:30 **Welcome Cocktail Reception hosted by
Meg Folds, JLJ President 2001-2002 and
Janet Reagor, JLJ President 2005-2006.**
This was a lovely event. Thank you so much, Meg and Janet!

Saturday, October 11, 2008

**Welcome by Vicki Harnage, JL of Jacksonville President 2008-2009
& Dorothy MacDiarmid, SPAC Chair 2008-2009**

Jack Levine, Founder 4Generations Institute

Importance of SPAC

Our good friend came and spoke to us about three key parts of building a successful advocacy team:

- 1- Strong relationships with elected officials and the population we're serving. Community partnerships and on-going relationships with experts is vital to good advocacy. It relieves the burden on us. He does point out that we could be more consistent and formal in our approach.
- 2- Newspapers because 100% of decision makers read them every day!
- 3- Media in general because it's the best way to get into the public consciousness.

As always, in his gracious way, Jack reminded us all that our work is essential for improving the quality of life for women, children and families in this state. The direct community projects of the JL need to be paired with public policy.

He gave out copies of the Strategic Plan he has been working on for the past year with the help of our past SPAC chair, Melissa Fritsch, and AJLI. With his 30 years of advocacy expertise and knowledge of the JL, Jack shares his vision for a Public Policy Council. In creating an advocacy statement that will guide our organization, he believes this could be a model for other Leagues nationally because of the diversity of the states economy and affairs in Florida.

The SPAC board will work with Jack to write a survey that will be sent out to all SPAC members in order to get your feedback on the Strategic Plan. Please take the time to read the plan that is included along with other handouts and supporting materials in this Fall Conference Summary Packet.

Kathy Waller, Junior League of Jacksonville Fostering Cares Chair

Kathy explained beautifully and passionately the work of her Fostering Cares committee. Their community wide annual backpack bundle donation drive has become so large and popular over the past 10 years, the JLJ partners with a local news channel to get the word out about Operation Backpack. Backpacks are filled with blankets, a toy, a change of clothes and toiletries...things to get a child through their first night in foster care. Kathy wrapped up so eloquently saying that the JL not only showed her an opportunity to help and equipped her with the tools to make a difference, but enabled the community to give and participate as well.

Jim Adams, Executive Director Family Support Services Jacksonville, Florida

Update on Aging out of Foster Care and Current Budget Crisis

Jim's office has 110 employees and has earned a 'green audit' for responsibly using public funds. His agency has kept administrative costs below 8% and has one of the most successful and efficient foster care programs in the state.

Last year 576 children were adopted in the Jacksonville area, setting a state record. At this time last October, 3,200 children were in their care with an average of 32 children per week coming into foster care. Through an aggressive campaign to wrap families in services in an effort to keep children living with their parents, there is a 20 year low of 2,800 children currently in care. The goal is to have under 1,000 children in foster care in less than 2 years. There are 350 certified foster homes in Jacksonville. Last year, 87 were over capacity, now only 9 are. The caseworker loads have been eased, as well, with caseworkers going from 34 cases to 17-18 currently. The goal is to lower it still to 12-14 cases per case worker. The average length of time in foster care has been cut from 24 months to 12 months. 24 months seemed like an eternity for a child and was detrimental. The connectivity is lacking and it is so necessary for children. They're hoping to reach 9 months, and if parents can't get it together in that time period, they will work to terminate parental rights and get these children adopted. They're working to make foster care a last alternative. Keeping families together is best.

Some other facts he shared were:

- Infants to 6 year olds are the largest population coming into foster care.
- Neglect and lack of money, not physical abuse is what brings kids into the system.
- Florida privatized foster care in the Legislature 6 years ago, but it came into practice 4 years ago.
- DCF still does investigations and removals, but private agencies like this one find foster homes, support services and care for the children.
- 2 trends in foster care are: more grandparents are taking care of the grandchildren & foster youth are becoming outstanding advocates for other kids in foster care.

They zeroed in on 3 zip codes where the most children came into foster care on a regular basis. They opened a prevention center in that area to work with families and support the parents with educational assessments, so they could get work and improve their family's life.

He said the need for advocates in this tough budget year is imperative. Legislators will listen to us because we're their constituency and they can't hold their office without us. He also reminded us that children in foster care aren't DCF kids or the state's kids...they're OUR kids. When asked what our message should be in Tallahassee he said "preserve funding". Even though the numbers of children in foster care is dropping, the support and prevention programs need funding more than ever.

Rena Coughlin, Executive Director of Nonprofit Center of Northeast Florida

Effective Lobbying, Advocacy, and Public Relations

Rena was a wealth of information and as you will read covered lots of ground in her 45 minutes! Thank you for sharing so much of your valuable experience.

She reminded us that the foundation of the state constitution is "All power is inherent in the people". We need to give the legislators the power and the courage to prioritize our agenda by sharing data that we have and let them know we're watching. Staff and legislators are relying on us to educate them. Speaking truth to power is so vital! She also stressed the importance of knowing who you're talking to and targeting who to talk to about specific legislation. Who's leading the committee or on it? Who's on their staff? Cultivate relationships year-round so it doesn't look like we're showing up to beg.

Be prepared to be flexible. Schedules change. Maybe your meeting is cut short. Walk with legislator to their next appointment.

Be respectful. The relationship is an exchange.

Attend Legislative Delegation Meetings. These sparsely attended meetings are a great opportunity to discuss our issues in a friendly way with several area legislators present at one time.

Fight for the common good and work together, but not at another organization's expense like pitting homelessness against funding the arts.

Work with coalitions because there is power in numbers. Just make sure the agenda isn't too broad.

Lobbyist spending is up even though the economy stinks, but a way to compete on equal footing is to prove our statewide impact and/or reach.

To help be comfortable and confident during your legislative visits, go to the State capital or city hall before your scheduled visit to get oriented.

Consider running for office. With your JL experience of sitting on a board or fundraising, you have valuable experience.

Consider mentoring. Share your JL experiences with high school and college students. You can learn so much through mentoring.

It has been proven that fundraising is more successful when paired with advocacy because you're actually showing a change in things, not just saying you're going to help. Promoting social entrepreneurship in these hard economic times- linking your mission with your product will bring success.

Rena's suggested reading list:

- State constitution- helps you understand the legislative process
- Collins Institute Tough Choices Report
- Taxwatch website
- www.myflorida.com- great resource for bills, legislative summaries
- Lobbying & Advocacy Handbook for Non-profit Organizations by Marcia Avener
- State Guide to Government
- Good to Great by Jim Collins
- Sayfie Review www.sayfiereview.com
- Make a Difference for Your Cause by Rhonda Clipi

Shannon Hewett, City of Jacksonville Chief of Legislative Affairs

Jacksonville Journey, A comprehensive community-wide Anti-crime initiative focusing on positive youth development, intervention, rehabilitation, neighborhood safety and stability.

City and county government is consolidated in Jacksonville. It has a strong mayor government with 19 city council members; 14 elected by district, 5 elected county wide.

For 13 years, they have rolled back property taxes while relying solely on that revenue for funding. While one-third of the budget goes to public safety, Jacksonville was still the 'Murder capital of Florida'. So Jacksonville Journey was born as a way to address public safety issues. 150 volunteers, non-profit leaders, electeds and many others were included in the task force and given 120 days to evaluate services. Elected officials read in the paper about the crime in their community, heard from their constituents and were taken to programs to see first hand successful and not so successful programs. Tying all the pieces together, they saw the reality and were able to imagine what their community would be like if they invested, if they participated.

It took pieces of PIE (prevention, intervention and enforcement) to work together, with prevention being the key. Programs are being competitively bid among non-profits and will be launched in the next 6 months.

3 new fees were proposed on utilities and trash pick up, but core functions of government weren't cut and millage rates didn't increase. But people were ready to have higher taxes for higher quality of living. Because so many people and groups were participants in the process, they were engaged from the beginning. No money was spent on marketing the plan

or its results because of the wide spread involvement. Government was willing to make an investment and show they care. Shannon suggests that less is more in Tallahassee. Zero in on 2-3 priorities and keep your message clear, concise and consistent.

**Introduction to Kids in the Kitchen Project and Initiative, Carol Voss
Kids in the Kitchen Project**

Conference attendees will split between the Jacksonville Public Library downtown and the Museum of Science and History where we will participate in a KIK event educating children about the Food Pyramid. *This was a fun, hands-on way for SPAC members to get involved and support the JJJ. Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of your Kids in the Kitchen series.*

Speaker: Ed Pratt-Dannals, Duval County Schools Superintendent

Duval County put together a strategic plan to close gaps in groups that traditionally haven't done well. The goal date is 2012. He handed out a brochure outlining the plan to turn around schools. To see the 8 step strategic plan visit www.duvalschools.org.

He asked us to consider advocating for:

- Long term adequate source of funding
- Forestall class size reduction and leave it at the school level. It is supposed to go to the class this year, but will cost \$850 million. We can't afford it. He said it wasn't a good investment.

He also suggested we partner with our local school to tutor or mentor a child. Thank teachers with lunches or other simple special treats.

Speaker: Maureen Horkan, Director of the Child Predator Cyber Crime Unit for the Office of Attorney General

WOW! I think this is how we all felt at the end of this presentation. What an eye opener. This is definitely a topic that is worthy of sharing at a GMM.

Maureen works with prosecutors, law enforcement and victim advocates (7 statewide) to "put perverts in jail"...her words!

1 in 7 kids have been solicited online

1 in 4 kids have experienced unwanted exposure to pictures

1 in 3 kids have received a request, direct call or mail/gifts

90% never reported any of these incidents

75% never told their parent(s)

Why?

Kids have a false sense of superiority and they don't want to lose their internet access.

What do they see?

Children being sexually abused and then broadcast on the internet via these outlets:

Chat rooms

Games

YouTube

It is completely up to parents to control their child's exposure and use of the internet. It is totally unregulated. It is up to us as parents and teachers to teach

our kids how to surf the internet. Otherwise, it's like letting them drive a car without a license. Colleges and sororities are rejecting kids based on the inappropriate content of their MySpace and Facebook pages.

Florida leads the nation in crackdown, but also in internet predators.

They work with trained school resource officers, student advisory councils, and use PSA's and ads to reach kids. They created a 50 minute cyber safety presentation for schools. Visit www.safeflorida.net/safesurf to make an appointment for your school.

Out of the 1800 schools in 67 school districts in FL, only 274 schools have had the presentation in their school.

Cybersafety site for elementary school kids: www.netsmart2kids.org

This was a startling and eye-opening way to end a long day. We would like to encourage you to contact someone from this office to come to your GMM and present to your membership. We will plan on this in the late winter/early spring. Until then, talk to your children and your child's school principal about cybersafety!

Sunday, October 12, 2008

9:00-12:00 Business Meeting

Meeting was called to order at 9:30. Dorothy and Jenay discussed the 2009-10 SPAC board nomination applications and encouraged members to consider nominating a friend or themselves. Job descriptions will be emailed as well as posted on the SPAC website. Dorothy encouraged members considering joining the board to let their League know they were interested in attending the AJLI training, ODI (Organizational Development Institute) or the Area III conference training. These AJLI trainings help you get a big picture view and understand how JL works generally. It will help you better understand how SPAC can more successfully support our member Leagues mission.

Dorothy reminded members to read their emails from SPAC. There is a conscious effort to reduce the amount of emails. SPAC e-newsletters will be sent out once a month (mid-month) until the Legislative session begins in March. Then the frequency will be bi-monthly or weekly depending on the issue and action required. Share these newsletters with your committee members! There will be information with suggestions on GMM presentations, JL publication articles and ads and many more great ideas to keep you and your League in the know and motivated!

This organization is only as strong as your participation. Your feedback and sharing of information & ideas is critical to the success of our advocacy efforts. Being a statewide group that only sees each other 3 times a year, is a challenge, but one we can overcome. Meeting or collaborating in smaller groups with other Leagues geographically close to you, communicating two ways via email to share ideas for GMM presentations and articles are a couple of ways to maintain the momentum and share the enthusiasm we build when we're together at conferences.

Dorothy also discussed defining and assigning Task Force responsibilities in order to have more people participating in our work.

1- Monitor Legislative priority issues:

- Lobbytools clippings- key words may need to be updated and refined based on priorities chosen
- Talk to key legislators either yourself or through person in district with close relationship. Get their updates on committee and bill progress and report to Task Force.

2- Communicate Task Force findings to SPAC board.

Allowing the SPAC board to:

- Send email updates monthly to the entire SPAC membership around the middle of each month (15th to 20th). Bi-monthly, possibly weekly updates sent during Session.
- Organize GMM presentation topics, Letters to the Editor and other grassroots volunteer opportunities.

Open discussion began on the proposed focus issues. Becker Holland, Health, Criminal Justice & Environment Task Force Chair, began.

HPV- Educational materials are coming from the State Dept. of Health

It is believed that Nan Rich and Kelly Skidmore will sponsor the bill again, as they did last year. The bill would be in support of providing educational materials for parents of 11-12 year old girls. The only mandate would be that the educational materials are available. We weren't sure how the materials would be offered to parents.

Brief discussion began with Tampa. They said their League wasn't comfortable with this issue. Sarasota said their League didn't support another mandate telling them what to talk to their kids about. Palm Beaches was concerned with the yet unknown long term side effects and uncomfortable with the morality aspects of this issue. They also felt the Position Statement was too narrow. Since revising position statements is a more involved process, the group decided to wait until after the vote and revise if HPV is one of our top 3 priorities before amending. Pensacola suggested framing this issue in a broader way to include men and the impact of HPV on cancers of the head.

Booster Seats- Our Legislative Analyst, Charlotte Mather, couldn't make it Sunday morning to give us her update, but we reiterated what she told us in Orlando. Gelber has agreed to sponsoring the bill in the Senate. Charlotte has committed to working this issue again and believes since our one major opponent is termed out, we will be successful this year! *I would like to have 2-3 other people join Charlotte in her efforts this year. If not in Tallahassee directly, as support and a conduit to relay information back to our group. This will be an option on the Jobs List for the Task Force.*

Sun Awareness Education- Since recess has been reinstated into the public school schedule, cancer prevention advocates have created educational materials (posters in the halls of the school, brochure handed out at PTA meetings) to remind parents and students to apply sunblock. *A copy of the brochure was*

included in the Summer Conference Summary packet and available on our website www.jflspac.org. We think this issue is a great opportunity for JLS to support in a hands-on way. Keep this issue in mind when stuffing backpacks for children next fall. Try to include samples of sunblock or at least the educational brochure.

Girls' Advocacy Project (GAP)- Jill Eckland from JLPB is very involved in GAP and reminded us that this is a program funded 100% by the state. The appropriations request is \$350,000 since \$150,000 is already included in the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) budget. Michele Hinton from JL Tampa shared so eloquently her feelings as to why we should continue to support this project.

\$1 Cigarette Tax- It was at this point that the group started to question which of our existing Position Statements this issue fell under. The JL Tampa ladies scoured the Position Statements eventually finding the *Position Statement on Children (Adopted 1988, Last reviewed Fall 2006) The Junior Leagues are committed to ensuring that children have the opportunities and services essential for their physical, intellectual, emotional, mental and social growth and their economic well-being and will advocate to see that such opportunities and services are provided.* I shared that a foster care provider I spoke to was in support of the \$1 cigarette tax with revenues going back into the general fund, because he felt that would benefit foster care. However, he was concerned about a long-term solution for funding. Mary Goldsmith from JL Jacksonville had some information from Maryland where a \$2 a pack tax was levied on cigarettes. They have seen a loss of revenue from the higher cigarette tax. Apparently, an additional \$2 tax is the threshold at which people reconsider smoking, but the \$1 tax wouldn't deter smokers and would increase FL revenues.

Youth Caregiver- After identifying the Position Statements that issues fell under, the group was running short on time and decided to defer drafting a new Position Statement to specifically address this issue.

- Foster Care- After discussions recently with foster care providers on statewide boards, the priority now is to simply maintain funding and avoid further cuts. Last year \$20 million was cut. Many providers are working under budget and having to privately raise one-third of their budget. With the successful new strategy of wrapping families at-risk in services and keeping children in the home combined with a shorter average length of time in foster care, the number of children in the system has been greatly reduced. Providers are hoping this success won't be misinterpreted by legislators as a reason to cut funding, but rather to appropriate funding to prevention programs. Rep. Glorioso has committed to using one bill slot of his each year he holds office to proposing a foster care bill. He will be sponsoring a bill that has yet to be drafted. The group felt that since many Leagues have community projects supporting foster care projects and this has been a priority of SPAC's for several years, it would be appropriate for SPAC to take up this issue without a specific bill just yet.

Class size Amendment- This amendment has been funded up until now. But it is now required to move from the school level to the class level for measurement. This will cost us \$850 million. And as we heard on Saturday night from the

Duval County School Superintendent, it is working for schools and serving the students well at the school level.

After clearing up some confusion about who is eligible to vote, our Chair-elect, Jenay Iurato, found in our Policies & Guidelines that one delegate from each dues paying member League of SPAC was eligible to vote. That said, a vote was taken on paper ballot asking for the delegate's top 3 issues.

JLs in attendance to vote:

Boca Raton
Clearwater
Daytona Beach
Ft. Myers
Gainesville
Jacksonville
Palm Beach
Orlando
Pensacola
Sarasota
St. Petersburg
Tampa

I hope I didn't leave anyone out. Please let me know if it's slipped my mind! And I will amend the list.

The results are as follows in alphabetical order:

- Booster Seats
- Foster Care
- GAP

A one page document outlining our 3 priorities is included in this summary packet. Please review and share with your fellow Leaguers at your November GMM. Even if your League doesn't require a vote, please share this information with your League.

Some Leagues aren't required by their Bylaws to have Board or membership approval of the 2009 SPAC Legislative Priorities, however some may be. Please check your League's Bylaws, discuss with your council VP or PE as well just to be on the safe side. Thank you!

Meeting was adjourned at 12 noon.

See you in Tallahassee February 10th!

