# HOUSTON NEWS

SPRING 2020







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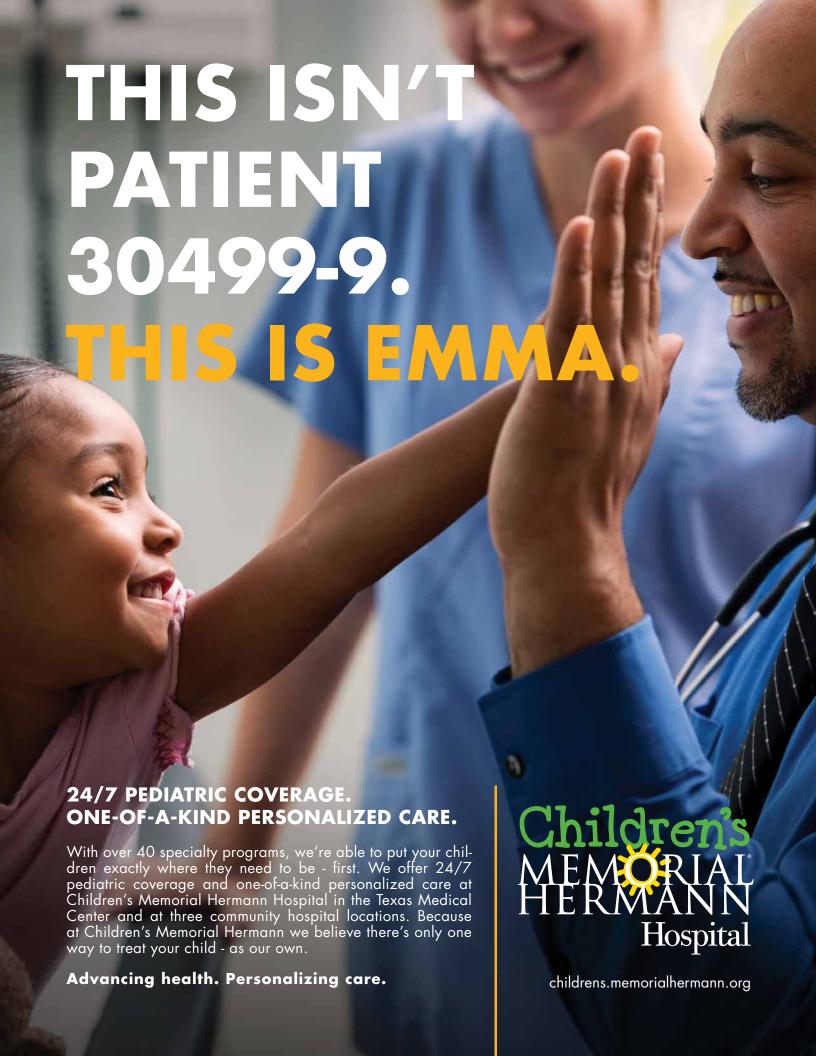
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#### **SPRING 2020**

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#### LETTER FROM THE

#### PRESIDENT

"Where flowers bloom, so does hope." - Lady Bird Johnson

For nearly a century, the Junior League of Houston has carried out its mission to promote voluntarism, develop the potential of women, and improve communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. In the wake of stay-at-home orders and social distancing guidelines related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the League's way of

serving our members and our community has changed, but the relevancy of the League's mission has not. As our community, and our world, navigates these unprecedented circumstances, the spirit of voluntarism is needed more than ever. Empowered League leaders have stepped up to lead our members and our community with grace and compassion. This issue is a celebration of the impact of the League's volunteer service and leadership training, and its innate ability to build stronger communities...in the good times and in the most challenging circumstances.

In the COVID-19 article, we shine a well-deserved spotlight on the efforts made by our League members to support Houston's basic needs, to provide valuable community resources, and to boost member and community morale. The work of our leaders and volunteers over the last several months has been nothing short of remarkable, and we are uplifted by the selfless work of our volunteers whose civic-minded efforts are making an impact in Houston.

Altruism, social change and civic leadership are at the heart of what the Junior League of Houston stands for, and no one embodies these principles better than the League members who are highlighted in this issue of *Houston News*, including the



2019 – 2020 Sara Houstoun Lindsey Award winner, **Megan Hotze**, and the 1969 – 1970 League President, **Vale Asche Russell**, who is featured *In Memoriam*.

As I turned through the pages in this issue, preparing to write this greeting, it was striking to see the pre-COVID events. Gathering in joyful celebration for Charity Ball, Tea Room and

Sustainer Events, engaging in hands-on, in-person activities to serve our community, even group photos seem like a distant memory during this period of quarantine and isolation. However, this experience has shown us all something so valuable...the importance of connection that the League gives its members to each other and to our Community, whether we are physically together or connected in a shared spirit and a shared mission. Houston is better because *this* community of leaders and volunteers is there to serve its most critical needs. I am so proud to serve as President of this organization!

As we move forward with cautious optimism, we know that we are united in our hope and our desire to protect ourselves, our loved ones, and the communities where we live and work. The seeds of hope that are planted with acts of compassion, good deeds, or efforts to help our community can have an outstanding effect when they are nurtured and allowed to bloom. The League's efforts simply wouldn't be possible without the many volunteers, donors, community partners and friends of the League who commit their time, energy and resources to bettering Houston. Thank you for your unwavering support that allow us to plant these seeds.

GRATEFULLY.

Jayne Johnston

JAYNE JOHNSTON

PRESIDENT



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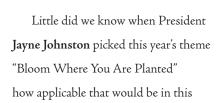




#### LETTER FROM THE

#### **EDITOR**

"Giving frees us from the familiar territory of our own needs by opening our mind to the unexplained worlds occupied by the needs of others." — Barbara Bush



challenging time. As we adjust to our new normal amid the COVID-19 pandemic, League members remain steadfast in responding to the needs of others.

Although League activities were cancelled at the building and in our community placements, members continue to be passionate about serving others.

Opportunities to help include volunteering through food banks, meal delivery services, as well as checking on neighbors and others in need. During a time of crisis, it reminds us how much we need each other.

Priorities have been rearranged and basic needs are not taken for granted.

No one knew this League year would end during a pandemic. My family and I adjusted to working from home, home schooling, social distancing and missing all the things we have taken for granted. We realize how blessed we are amid the hardships many are facing. We try to do our part to make things better.



My family and I joined other League members in decorating paper lunch bags for Kids' Meals Inc. and filled them with shelf stable milk, granola

bars and peanut butter crackers, and Kids' Meals then adds a sandwich. The need has swelled, and they now provide lunch to over 7,000 children each day.

We have dropped groceries off at neighbors' doorsteps and called community members to check on them. Still it does not seem like enough. I know many of my fellow volunteers and friends feel the same way. We have been trained to reach out and make a difference. Not being able to help others in person has been difficult, yet the best way to serve our community has been to stay at home and find creative ways to help from afar.

In this issue of *Houston News*, you will read about League memories from the past and celebrations of the present. Be blessed with the hope and promise that tomorrow brings and that we will get through this together. The future is bright because we will make it that way.

SINCERELY.

Jara-Nell Van Lant

SARA-NELL VAN LANT

**EDITOR** 



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MAKING A DIFFERENCE



by JeNeika Smith Boone and Amanda Hanks

JLH IN THE COMMUNITY

DURING THE

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In March 2020, the COVID-19 virus began to spread across the United States, leading to several cities and states enacting stayat-home orders for several weeks. While a number of the Junior League of Houston community placements were temporarily halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in true Junior League of Houston tradition, the League rallied to continue to support the Houston community, as well as its own members, in several ways.

In early April, the League published a list of volunteer opportunities via the League's website that members and supporters could complete from home, including purchasing critically needed items from BEAR... Be A Resource for CPS Kids and Casa de Esperanza, writing notes to families staying at Ronald McDonald House Houston, decorating lunch bags and packing lunch kits at home for Kids' Meals, donating personal protective



JLH President Jayne Johnston and General Manager Malcolm Rowland in the reopened Tea Room (left)

JLH staff members distribute pantry meals from the League garage (right)

equipment or medical equipment and recording thank you messages to healthcare workers for Project C.U.R.E. and volunteering in small shifts to support the Houston Food Bank. Volunteers in Sing Along with Seniors placement filmed videos and assembled activity book care packages to share with senior centers in the Houston community. The League also created a JLH Emeritus Member Check-In where League members made phone calls to check in with all 340 of the League's Sustainer Emeritus members (80-plus year-old League members) during the local stay-at-home order.

The Pantry offered a variety of fresh and delicious meals for purchase to the community as area grocery stores saw long lines and shortages of many items. Volunteers from the Ronald McDonald House Houston and Casa De Esperanza House of Hope placement delivered meals on behalf of the League to residents, while observing social distancing guidelines. In honor of Mother's Day, the League delivered breakfast bundles from The Pantry to healthcare heroes at The Woman's Hospital of Texas, a community partner.

Several League members were able to directly continue to work with our agencies to fill the gap with much needed sustenance during this difficult time. As the stay-at-home orders were eased at the end of April, the League offered additional volunteer shift opportunities to assist Books Between Kids and Kids' Meals during the month of May.

The League hosted several virtual Membership Engagement Events, including a virtual dance party, as a means for members to stay



In honor of Mother's Day, the League delivered breakfast bundles from The Pantry to healthcare heroes at The Woman's Hospital of Texas, a community partner.



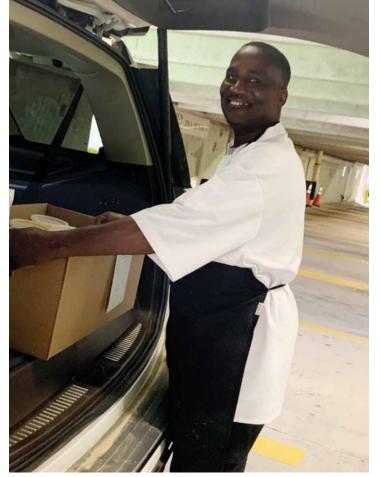
Casey Jo Chapman, Community Impact Director - Family Support dropped off meals at Ronald McDonald House Houston

connected. Trainings and sub-councils, councils and the Board of Directors meetings were all held virtually beginning in March. The May General Meeting, including the passing of the gavel, was recorded, turned into a YouTube video and sent out to all members to watch remotely.

At the final Board of Directors Meeting of the League year, the Board approved \$47,000 in community program funds to be dispersed to the Houston community for COVID-19 related relief, which included:

- \$25,000 to Kids' Meals of Houston to help them serve nearly 7,500 children a day, who would otherwise go hungry during this time when school is out of session,
- \$9,000 to BEAR (Be A Resource for CPS Kids) who unfortunately are seeing an uptick in their CPS cases during this time,
- \$6,500 to Baylor Teen Health Clinic to provide diapers and wipes to moms who cannot otherwise afford them and
- \$6,500 to Star of Hope to help them address food insecurity for the women and children living in their homeless shelter.

In the true spirit of a JLH volunteer, the League's members rose to the challenges of the past few months and found creative and innovative ways to continue providing support to the Houston community while adhering to local stay-at-home orders.



JLH Chef Michael Smith loads pantry items for delivery



Laura Czapski, Ronald McDonald House Houston Chairman



Kids' Meals bags by Melissa Matsu and Phil Leedell









Sustainer Jennifer Howard and her goddaughter Ellie Elmore made bags with encouraging words for Kids' Meals.



The League is grateful to all our members, staff, and the Houston community for their help and their contributions during this time.

Thank you for continuing to Build A Better Community!



# FAMILY-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENTS FOCUS ON CHILDREN & EDUCATION

by Sarah Davidson

This year the Community Outreach Events Committee offered a fresh take on group meetings by giving League members the chance to volunteer alongside their families in the inaugural Family Service Day established on Saturday, November 23, 2019.

After hearing League members' glowing reviews of last year's family-friendly inaugural focus area event with Undies for Everyone, Community Vice President, Kalinda Campbell, decided to prioritize similar service opportunities where League members could invite their significant others and children. Kalinda shared, "League leadership listens closely to member feedback. My goal for this year's Community Outreach Events was to align League members' enthusiasm for

including their families with dedicating service hours to the focus area of Children's Education." Ashlee Kilchrist, Community Outreach Events Committee Chair, noted the reasons behind the success of the family-focused event: "This Community Outreach Event earned group meeting credit, took place on a weekend and eliminated the need for childcare. These factors made it a great fit for League members who are parents."

The League hosted its first annual Family Service Day at the Nature Discovery Center in Bellaire. In this inaugural event, over 80 League members volunteered with their families, partners, and children of all ages, including wearable babies. In the one-hour



volunteer activity, League members and families worked in the gardens, pruned and weeded the trail, removed litter from the grounds, learned about animal care, and prepared craft kits for future school group visits. Afterward the children were treated to a meet and greet with the Discovery Center's Animal Ambassadors.

At the conclusion of Family Service Day, JLH President, Jayne Johnston hosted the participants for snack time at her home.

Community Outreach Events Committee member Hannah Laser reflected, "The first annual Family Service Day was a great success!

The event created an opportunity for family members to participate

in League voluntarism while inspiring the next generation of young leaders to serve our local community."

#### Other Community Outreach Events for the 2019-2020 League Year include:

Backpack Buddy Program
in partnership with the Houston Food Bank
Childspree in partnership with Child Advocates, Inc.
Family Service Day at Nature Discovery Center
Kids in the Kitchen at the League
Minor League Day at the League



















The Pen Pals community project was initiated by the League in 1994, and it is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. The mission of Pen Pals is to support the education of children in public schools by using letter writing to improve reading, writing, penmanship, and vocabulary skills.

In the placement, League volunteers are paired with third through fifth grade students at one of four Houston Independent School District elementary schools. These four schools serve a diverse population of students, many of whom receive free or reduced-price lunch. In the 2019 – 2020 school year, approximately 500 elementary students established meaningful relationships with League volunteers through this placement.

Throughout the school year, League volunteers exchange handwritten letters approximately twice every month with their pen pals. Volunteers send letters that are engaging and fun, motivating the students to expand reading and writing skills. Pen Pals volunteer **Courtney Rupp** said, "The children we interact with throughout the year show marked improvement in their writing skills. I believe that the interaction with League members also improves their self-esteem and confidence levels."

The League also hosts events during the school year, such as Pen Pals Celebration Days, which present opportunities for the League volunteers and students to reinforce the pen pal relationship.

The impression made on the students is clear. The Project Coordinator at Pilgrim Academy, Pilar Missas, shared this about a League member who went out of her way to make an impact, "She made a difference in his life, by letting him tell his story and by truly being interested so that she could ask questions that he knew how to answer. It was about him, not her. He got to be a kid that an adult wanted to get to know."

Braeburn Elementary Schools' Lead Fourth Grade Teacher Larue McDaniel said, "Pen Pals has been such a blessing for our kids at Braeburn... The excitement and eagerness are so evident each time the letters arrive." The Pen Pals placement continues to make an impact on young learners in Houston, one student at a time.







# No one should ever have to grieve alone.

Did you know ... there is a **Pregnancy Loss Grief Support Group** 

for women who have experienced the perinatal death of a child through miscarriage or stillbirth?

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2019-2020

# COMMUNITY ISSISTANCE GRANTS



Each year, the Junior League of Houston, Inc. awards Community Assistance Grants to organizations that do not receive ongoing volunteer support or financial assistance through the League's Community Projects. The League's Community Assistance Committee evaluates the grant requests based on their alignment with member-determined impact areas, conducts site visits and ultimately makes funding recommendations. When choosing recipient agencies to fund, the Committee considers whether the agency's request would address a critical or basic need, support a pilot project or expand a significant service to the greater Houston community.

The 2019 – 2020 Community Assistance
Committee reviewed funding requests from over 80
agencies. The following 12 agencies were awarded a
total of \$125,000 in funding. A reception and check
presentation occurred on Monday, January 27, 2020.

#### Cherish Our Children:

Cherish Our Children exists to end the multigenerational cycle of incarceration. League funds will be used to build infrastructure for the No More



Victims program, a course elective offered to children of incarcerated parents who attend Worthing, Sterling and Furr high schools. The classes offer facilitated, peer-supported sessions which create a trusting and safe environment for students.



Children At Risk: Children At Risk is a research and advocacy nonprofit focused on children's health, safety, education and economic security. League funds will be used to expand and support four Human Trafficking Awareness Tours

to raise awareness of the prevalence of trafficking in our community.

#### Clothed By Faith:

Clothed By Faith aims to demonstrate God's love by providing clothing to those in need. League funds will be used for a week-long supply of



gently used clothing, shoes, socks and underwear for 500 Houston-area children in need.



#### Harris County Hospital

**District:** Harris County Hospital District owns and operates three hospitals and numerous clinics throughout the county. League funds will be used to purchase new books for the

Harris Health System's Reach Out and Read program. The books will be distributed to children at their well-visit checkups at Harris Health's three Pediatric and Adolescent Health Centers: Bear Creek, C.E. Odom and Pasadena.

#### His Grace Foundation:

His Grace Foundation provides physical, emotional and financial support for the patients and families on the Bone Marrow Transplant



Unit (BMTU) of Texas Children's Hospital. League funds will be used to provide a seven-week summer academic enrichment program for patients and their siblings.



#### Houston: reVision:

Houston: reVision works to break the cycle of isolation among the most profoundly disconnected youth that are in the juvenile justice

system. League funds will support the one-time purchase of kitchen equipment and supplies for the revision Community Center in the Gulfton/Sharpstown neighborhood.

#### Mission of Yahweh:

The Mission of Yahweh is focused on ending the cycle of homelessness and dependency. League funds will be used to pilot



the Kreative Kingdom Clubs, a year-round, after-school education program for school-aged children at their campus. Activities will include cooking, arts, music sports, science and drama.



#### Nehemiah Center,

Inc.: The Nehemiah Center, Inc. provides assistance to low income families who are invested in seeking a better future for their children

through education, emotional wellness and spiritual enrichment. League funds will support the Food Program at Nehemiah, located in downtown Houston, which serves breakfast, lunch and dinner to more than 180 children each day.

#### Operation Homefront:

Operation Homefront's mission is to build strong, stable and secure military families so they can thrive—not simply struggle to get



by—in the communities that they work so hard to protect. League funds will provide approximately 350 military children with backpacks filled with school supplies for the 2020 – 2021 school year. The supplies will be distributed through Back-to-School Brigade events.



#### Social Motion Skills,

Inc.: Social Motion Skills, Inc. exists to inspire and empower individuals with autism and similar special needs to achieve their full potential. League funds will be used to expand social skills classes to pre-K and kindergarten-age children with autism at Social Motion Skills' center in the Spring Valley area of Spring Branch and at Texas Children's Hospital's Meyer Center for Developmental Pediatrics.

#### The Way Home

Adoption, Inc.: The Way Home Adoption provides adoption recruitment and matching services focused on older youth in foster care.



League funds will be used to implement a new program, "Enrich and Engage," that provides 10 events throughout the year to allow older children and prospective adoptive families to meet and interact in a less formal setting.



#### Young Audiences:

Young Audiences' mission is to inspire young people and expand their learning through the arts. League funds will fund a pilot program at

Harper Disciplinary Alternative Education Program and Crossroads Alternative, two campuses that serve children from 6th to 12th grades. The year-round program teaches self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making using arts-integration training and support while also offering prevocational skills training.

# MANY IHANKS

## FOR THE THOROUGH EFFORTS OF THE 2019 - 2020 COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE:

Meredith McCrary, Chairman

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE:

Courtney Baker
Tamara Bibb
Allyson Lambert
Melissa Neeley
Karen Burke, Sustainer Advisor



#### SIRE - NEW OUTSIDE BOARD REPRESENTATIVE AGENCY



by Katie Doyle

Each year, nonprofit organizations, whose missions align with the League's, apply to be a part of the Outside Board Representative Program. During the 2018 - 2019 year, the League was thrilled to announce that SIRE-Therapeutic Horsemanship would be one of the four new agencies participating in the program. SIRE's mission is to improve the quality of life for people with special needs through therapeutic horsemanship activities and therapies, and educational outreach. The League's Outside Board Representative Program provides members the opportunity to share their talents with local nonprofits by serving on their boards. The position is an ex-officio (non-voting) capacity.

SIRE-Therapeutic Horsemanship was founded in 1983 and serves adults and children with a wide variety of special needs including cerebral palsy, autism, Down syndrome, multiple sclerosis, developmental delay, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, traumatic brain injury and spinal cord injury. Beth Burroway, SIRE Development and Communications Director



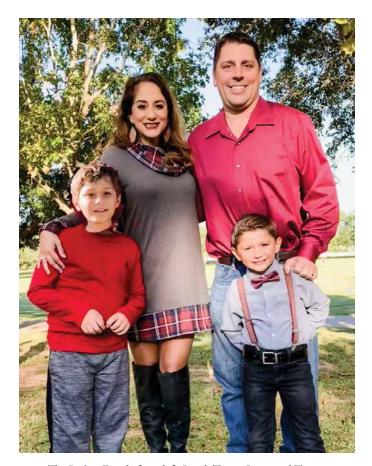




and volunteer says, "Through my work with SIRE, I've learned more about how the power of therapeutic horsemanship has changed lives. I've been moved to hear stories about young riders who have achieved their first steps or first words thanks to meaningful interaction with SIRE's horses and caring professional training team and volunteers."

Last year, with the help of its nearly 40 specially trained therapy horses, SIRE provided 7,836 service hours to 284 clients through its weekly therapeutic horsemanship riding program. Volunteers gave their time for a value of more than \$500,000.

Tanya Merla Leiber is a member of the League and sits on the



The Leiber Family from left, Jared, Tanya, Jason and Trevor

board of SIRE through the Outside Board Representative Program. Tanya has taken on a myriad of League leadership roles including Development Vice President and Charity Ball Chairman. Her experience with the League allows her to provide SIRE with a new perspective and "help SIRE's leadership shape a new future for the organization and the clients it serves."

Tanya felt called to this volunteer opportunity and shared her personal connection to SIRE's mission. "I was drawn to serve in this role as I yearn to grow more educated in organizations serving the autism community. My oldest son, Jared, was diagnosed on the spectrum several years ago. The number one diagnosis SIRE serves is autism, 51% of the client base is children. As a new board member, they encourage us to go on rides to feel what the riders might experience. I can be timid with horses, the feeling of not being in full control. Jared also has that same fear. I'm looking forward to the opportunity to ride with him, make a new memory and bond in this new adventure together."

The League's Outside Board Representative Program provides

local nonprofit organizations the opportunity to work with talented League members who can provide insight into nonprofit operations. Through thoughtful collaboration, nonprofits in the Greater Houston area continue to challenge themselves to grow to meet the needs of our ever changing community. #



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"BLOOM WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED" MEAN TO THEM?

#### Why I JLH:

"The League gives me the opportunity to volunteer in a very meaningful, systematic way that ensures I maximize my time while helping my community. Further, I love the sisterhood and the ability to meet like-minded women with similar purpose and vision."

#### What does "Bloom Where you are Planted" mean to you?

"To embrace all of the opportunities to serve and grow where you are in life, to create opportunities for yourself and to create your own happiness."



Years in the League: 7
Current League Placement:
Casa de Esperanza

#### Why I JLH:

"I volunteer because I live to give and I love to serve, and I can't think of a better organization in Houston to be able to do so strategically and abundantly with a diverse group of like-minded women."

#### What does "Bloom Where You are Planted" mean to you:

"This theme has been so fitting and relevant to this season of my life both personally and professionally. It means being grateful and mindful of the spaces we are in and taking every advantage to grow, learn and contribute. It means accepting things we can't change but being empowered to change what we can, and truly blossoming into our full destiny and potential wherever we are currently. Lastly, it means sewing good life seeds, watering

them and being patient and faithful as we wait for them to blossom."

#### Iman Garrett-Price

Years in League: 1 (Provisional)

Current League Placements:

TCH Radio Lollipop and Tea Room



#### Why I JLH:

"To surround myself with strong, empowering women that are on a mission to do the most good - everywhere we can, as much as we can. Networking with like-minded ladies has been such a treasure and I've made lasting friendships beyond what I could have ever imagined!"

#### What does "Bloom Where you are Planted" mean to you:

"Bloom Where You are Planted means doing what you can with your

circumstances. Always looking for the positive side of things and seeking out opportunities to make a positive impact in any situation."



Years in the League: 2 Current League Placement: Ready Hands

#### Why I JLH:

"I love the League. We have moved extensively for work and I have transferred to two other leagues. What makes the League so special is the organization. Even though it's a huge league of women, I have never felt lost. When I transferred back in, I was a bit worried because my prior leagues were much smaller, but so many women have reached out to make sure I was updated on meetings and to offer any help."

#### What does "Bloom Where you are Planted" mean to you:

Since moving back to Texas, I have had a lot on my plate, and I know many women in the League feel the same. To me "Bloom Where you are Planted" means, wherever you may be in your life, the League can be a place where you can grow as an individual and help others. Sometimes you need a special place where you can go and focus

on someone or something besides yourself."

#### Celeste Schurman

Years in League: 6 Current League Placement: Spring Transfer



### What does "Bloom Where You Are Planted" mean to you:

"Wherever life plants you, bloom with grace."

#### Sarah Loudermilk

Years in the League: 3

Current League Placement: Children's

Museum of Houston Head Active



#### What does "Bloom Where You Are Planted" mean to you:

"Bloom Where You are Planted has a two-fold meaning to me. First, to understand and accept your current circumstances. To be content with what you have, even if it is not the perfect situation. Second, to thrive in your current surroundings. Take advantage of any opportunities

and push past any challenges to grow stronger than ever. Remain positive and focus on succeeding in your current environment."



Years in the League: 1 (Provisional) Current League Placements: TCH Library and Tea Room



#### What does "Bloom Where You Are Planted" mean to you:

"Excel by maximizing the amazing opportunities presented and

available through the League. Give 100% in situations or projects, even if it's not exactly what you expected."

#### Dr. Shiree Berry

Years in the League: 3
Current League Placement:
Ready Hands





#### Why I JLH:

"To volunteer and make new friends while having an impact on the community."

#### What does "Bloom Where You Are Planted" mean to you:

"Take advantage of the opportunities you are given. Find the reason why you were planted and continue blooming. The League is one big

garden and every member is a seed. Each year we choose a placement with endless possibilities."

#### Elyse Kearns

Years in the League: 5
Current League Placement: Charity
Ball Decorations Committee



#### Why I JLH:

There are two words in the JLH Mission Statement that I like to use personally and professionally: developing and improving. To develop means to grow or advance. Alone, I can help someone or something develop, but as part of an organization that also develops the potential of women, I feel an extra sense of daily joy and accomplishment. To improve means to make or become better. Being a part of the JLH mission to improve communities with trained volunteers, I am reminded that this life I live is so much bigger than me. I JLH because developing and improving allows for a better today, tomorrow, and future for everyone."

#### What does "Bloom Where you are Planted" mean to you:

"It means you are exactly where you are supposed to be. In your "where," a seed was planted which has allowed you to bloom. Receive the strength from your sunny or rainy days to be great while being the

best version of yourself, and helping those around you to do the same."

#### Nicole Odom

Years in League: 6 Current League Placement: Houston Food Bank



"It means accepting things we can't change but being empowered to change what we can, and truly blossoming into our full destiny and potential wherever we are currently. Lastly, it means sewing good life seeds, watering them and being patient and faithful as we wait for them to blossom."

#### Why I JLH:

"It is refreshing to be surrounded by such a diverse group of professional, stylish and friendly women. It gives me a sense of pride to be a part of an organization that makes a meaningful positive impact on the City of Houston."

#### What does Bloom Where you are Planted mean to me:

"Finding beauty in your current environment. Taking that beauty, enhancing it, and using it to make yourself better. There are so many opportunities through the League for women to plant themselves into voluntarism and for each of us to bloom into a better more beautiful being by giving back."

#### Brandi Downey

Years in League: 4
Current League Placement:
Camp Hope





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The long-standing partnership between Texas Children's Hospital and the Junior League of Houston dates back more than 60 years, and started with the Junior League's 1947 donation to the Children's Hospital Foundation.

In 1954, the Junior League moved its health clinic to Texas Children's Hospital. The missions of Texas Children's Hospital and the League have

aligned with focus on impact areas such as pediatric care, education and research.

Texas Children's Hospital once again supports the Junior League this year as its Premier Community Partner. Not only does Texas Children's Hospital provide numerous opportunities for the Junior League's provisional members to volunteer more than 9,000 hours annually, but it also engages the Junior League's active membership through group meetings, general meetings and placement opportunities.

Through years of collaboration, these two organizations have ensured that countless children have had access to quality health care through innovative programs, and the Junior League is honored for the tradition to continue.

# The Woman's Hospital of Texas<sup>®</sup>

#### THE WOMAN'S HOSPITAL OF TEXAS

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over 11,000 babies a year – more than any other hospital in Texas. The Pediatric Center provides high-quality care to children and teenagers, including a convenient 24-hour pediatric emergency room.

Located near the Texas Medical Center in the heart of Houston, The Woman's Hospital of Texas offers expertise and outstanding care in breast health, imaging, gynecology, obstetrics, high-risk pregnancy, neonatology and minimally invasive surgery.

#### SEWELL

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Sewell Automotive Companies supports the Junior League of Houston's commitment to community service, voluntarism and the advancement of leadership opportunities for women.

Sewell's financial contribution supports the extensive outreach of the Junior League and furthers the impact of its members. In addition to its financial support, Sewell Automotive Companies hosts an educational group meeting as part of the Junior League's Training and Education Program.

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#### CCRM FERTILITY HOUSTON

CCRM Fertility Houston shares the Junior League of Houston's commitment to improving the health and well-being of families. Centralized medical suites and treatment facilities enable CCRM Fertility Houston to provide continuous, on-site care for patients from the initial consultation to egg retrieval and embryo transfer.

One of the industry's pioneers in fertility science and personalized care, CCRM Fertility Houston's network scale allows them to continually invest in physicians, scientists, technology and research to offer families a faster path to a healthy baby.



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by Dr. Julie Longoria & Dr. Stephen Chen



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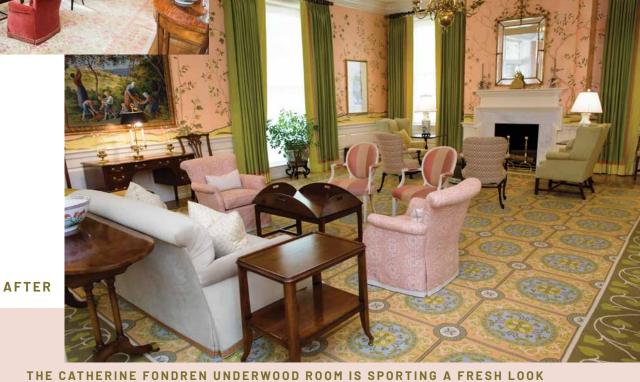


#### THE REDESIGNED UNDERWOOD ROOM

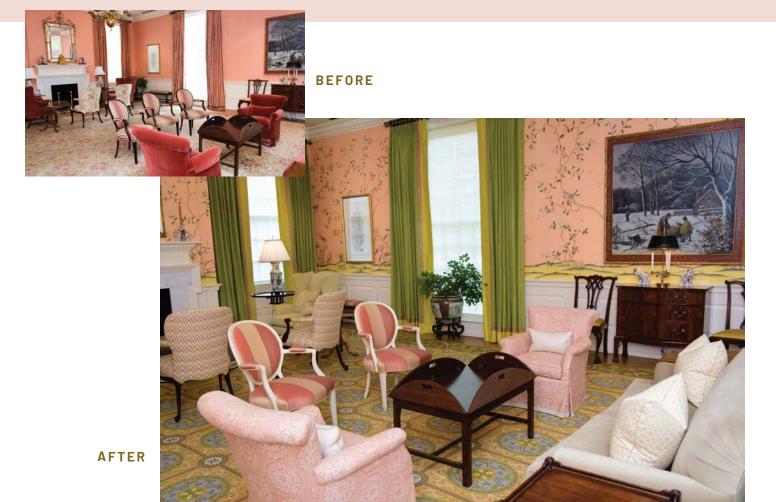


by Lindsey Raspino





THE CATHERINE FONDREN UNDERWOOD ROOM IS SPORTING A FRESH LOOK
AFTER MORE THAN 30 YEARS. THE RENOVATION OF THE ROOM JUST
INSIDE THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE LEAGUE BUILDING IS THE CULMINATION
OF MORE THAN EIGHTEEN MONTHS OF WORK BY THE HOUSE COMMITTEE.





Megan A. Ryan

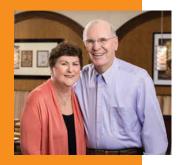
It was executed under the watchful eye of 2019 – 2020 Building Chairman Megan A. Ryan. The renovation was possible because a very forward-thinking group of League leaders not only raised the money to build and furnish the current building, but they also established the Building Preservation Fund to maintain the structure and interiors.

When the current building opened its doors April 1, 1986, under JLH President Anne Tucker, the furnishings from the Underwood Room in the previous building were moved into the new double-parlor Underwood Room. "The room's colors, furniture, fabrics and rugs took their inspiration and tone from the room's paintings of the Four Seasons. The design was intended to reflect welcome, comfort and a standard of excellence in place and organization. We are so fortunate to have had such generosity from the Underwood family," says Anne.

The House Committee engaged Wells Design in 2018 to guide a full refresh of the space that makes a first impression on all visitors to the League. The House Committee reviewed multiple design schemes which included the wall coverings, drapery, ceiling accents, and fabrics that are now in place. The existing furniture had served members and guests well for many years, and the House Committee thoughtfully preserved it for continued use by reupholstering the existing furniture with beautiful fabric

and trims carefully selected by Wells Design. In fact, only two new pieces of furniture appear in the remodel—the ottomans in front of the fireplaces.

There are two new features of the room that are unique to the League. First are the new rugs, which were handwoven in Nepal based on a sketch by Jerry Jeanmard of Wells Design. Second is the wallcovering—silk panels by de Gournay that were hand painted in Hong Kong with colors carefully selected by the design team to complement the room's fabrics and trims. "The Underwood Room serves as the 'living room' for the League, and I look forward to seeing our members, patrons, and guests enjoy this beautiful and inviting space for years to come," says Megan.









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Malcolm Rowland

OST MEMBERS OF THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF HOUSTON, INC.
HAVE HAD THE PLEASURE OF MEETING MALCOLM ROWLAND,
THE TEA ROOM GENERAL MANAGER, WHO DIRECTS ALL
PARTIES, BANQUETS AND FUNCTIONS HELD AT THE LEAGUE
BUILDING. A LESSER KNOWN FACT ABOUT MALCOLM IS THAT HE WILL
SOON CELEBRATE 35 YEARS OF SERVICE TO OUR LEAGUE! AS WE
PREPARE TO CELEBRATE HIS UPCOMING ANNIVERSARY, MALCOLM WAS
KIND ENOUGH TO SHARE SOME OF HIS FAVORITE LEAGUE MEMORIES
THROUGH THE YEARS.



## 1. The new building's grand opening

Malcolm was hired at the League in 1985 to oversee the move from the building on Post Oak Park Drive to the present location on Briar Oaks Lane. On April 1,1986, the League formally opened its new location with a ribbon cutting on the front porch followed by an open house. Malcolm recalled, "The move to the new building generated tremendous excitement in the League community." League member Sara Houstoun Lindsey planned a party to debut the new building, and Malcolm helped her plan the menu. At the party, popular entertainers Larry Gatlin and the Gatlin Brothers performed on the main stage in the ballroom along with Houston's popular Ed Gerlach Orchestra. The after party in the Tea Room featured a performance by an Elvis impersonator direct from Las Vegas!



## 2. A sparkling gift

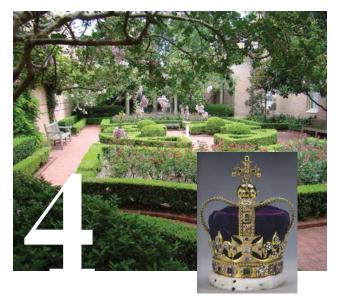
During the move to the new building, the League's Interiors

Committee was tasked with decorating the formal ballroom. One
of the committee members was Mary Frances Couper, a founding
member of the Theta Charity Antiques Show, who Malcolm
remembers for her "kind disposition and exquisite taste." When Mrs.
Couper proposed the purchase of crystal chandeliers to adorn the
ballroom, she was informed that the Interiors Committee lacked the
budget for such an extravagant purchase. In response, Mrs. Couper
generously wrote a check from her personal account to purchase all
six chandeliers.



## 3. POTUS visits the League

In 1998, Former President Jimmy Carter visited the League in conjunction with his volunteer work with Habitat for Humanity. Malcolm created a special menu for the presidential luncheon in the garden rooms. He partnered with the United States Secret Service in the exciting task of selecting an enclosed room within the League building where President Carter would be secure in the unlikely event of an emergency. Malcolm recalls of the experience, "It was a great honor to host a former President at the League building."



## 4. Luncheon for a Duchess

In the mid-1900s, the League hosted a Duchess from England's Mountbatten family, the relatives of Queen Elizabeth's husband, Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh. The Duchess visited Houston to open Mountbatten House, an assisted living center located in Highlands, Texas, near Channelview. To celebrate the opening, the Daughters of the British Empire hosted a luncheon for the Duchess at the League. To plan the luncheon, Malcolm partnered with the Duchess' lady in waiting and two agents from the London Metropolitan Police Service's Scotland Yard.



## 5. Movie filming at the League

For a week in 1995, the League welcomed Oscar-winning actress Sally Field to film "A Woman of Independent Means," a popular TV miniseries based on the national best-selling fiction book originally published in 1978. The plot of the miniseries followed the life of Bess Steed Gardner, a well-to-do woman whose courage helped her to overcome life's challenges. Over the week of filming, the League's garden was transformed into an outdoor restaurant, dancing scenes were filmed in the ballroom and the tea room parlor was rearranged to resemble a private home. For her performance in the miniseries, Sally Field earned nominations for Emmy, Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild Awards.



## 6. The Pecan Ball: The Tea Room's "star dish"

When Malcolm considers the number of luncheons, dinners, banquets and special events that the League hosts annually, he estimates that the Tea Room kitchen produces over 20,000 pecan balls each year! He calls the pecan ball the Tea Room menu's "star dish" due to its popularity with League members and patrons. When Malcolm hosts patrons and members for "walk throughs" in the days before their event, he often presents them with the opportunity to taste the pecan ball. In his experience, patrons tend to change their dessert order immediately after taking just one bite of the League's signature delicacy

Many thanks to Malcolm for offering a glimpse into the League's past.  $\ensuremath{\textit{/}}$ 





by Allyson Cook

In 2004 the Sara Houstoun Lindsey Award was created to annually honor an outstanding active League member. All criteria were based upon Sara's wishes and included that the recipient "will understand and be committed to the League's mission of promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women and building a better community. She will be determined to make a difference and, through example, inspire a shared sense of responsibility by living the mission of the League as a part of her everyday life."

The 2019–2020 Sara Houstoun Lindsey Award winner is **Megan Coody Hotze**, who beautifully embodies the qualities most prized by Sara. As eloquently expressed by Megan's friend and League Sustainer, Susan Richardson Barnes, "Since meeting Megan in 2011, I have marveled at her ability to manage large projects, to marshal passion for great causes and to force positive energy into every situation... Megan is beautiful

to the core. She is kind, smart, poised and down to earth. She is not about pretense or the easy task or self-aggrandizement.

Megan accepts the charge she has been given and serves with joy."

Megan has shown these qualities both within the League and in the broader community. A native Houstonian and graduate of Texas A&M University, Megan joined the League in 2009. Since then, and while raising three young girls with her husband John, she has undertaken "each placement with joy and professionalism."



The Hotze Family - Luke, Megan, Grace, Vivian and Caroline

Megan has held a broad range of League responsibilities. After her provisional year, she accepted leadership positions in the Tea Room before embarking on a series of Chairmanships: Membership Training; Admissions; Charity Ball Underwriting; Health and Well-Being; Memorial Hermann-Medical Center; Building; and currently, the Strategic Planning Study Committee for Development Activities. Along the way, she has also served on the Community Assistance Committee and as a provisional mentor. Susan says, "I have seen her wait tables, lead an underwriting team, comfort a child at Memorial Hermann, execute a flawless Admissions process and happily tote the Building Chairman's massive binder, each role with the same high level of joy and determination."

Megan has been involved in the community beyond League placements. She partners with non-profits for the duration. She's a persuasive ambassador, be it Bo's Place, Baylor College of Medicine, the Women's Home, the Children's Literacy Initiative or DePelchin Children's Center. One quality most admired is that "she cares deeply about making sure she hands projects off to the next person better than she found them."

Today, Megan supports her daughters' activities at St. Michael's School and in after school sports. Her other non-profit focus is on Memorial Park Conservancy, where her daughters help plant trees; a Theatre Under the Stars' program, The River, which provides fine arts engagement

to children with disabilities; and SBP Houston, founded in New Orleans to provide long term natural disaster recovery relief and was expanded to Houston after Hurricane Harvey. Megan will co-chair its annual fundraiser this year.

Megan is herself a force of nature. After eight years in marketing at a local interior design firm, she started Megan Hotze Creative, a PR firm, to allow more working flexibility. She continues to instill a philanthropic spirit in her daughters by example. She tirelessly puts her heart into every worthy cause she embraces. She believes in completing an assignment on time, on budget and with happy coworkers. Megan truly exemplifies the League's training at its best and carries its mission every day of her life. //







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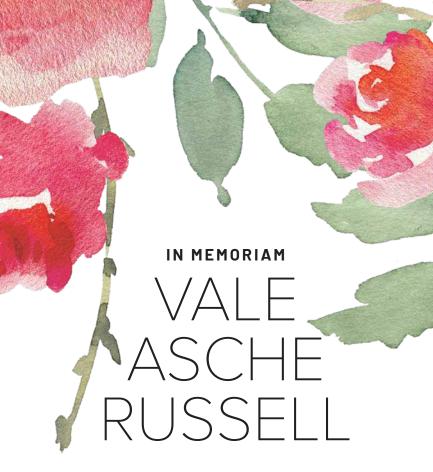
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OCTOBER 12, 1933 - JANUARY 31, 2020

by Susan Richardson Barnes

When Miss Vale Asche joined the Junior League in 1956, she reported to the News Sheet that she wished there were more hours in the day. A recent summa cum laude graduate of Smith College, she was teaching Spanish at Kinkaid, pursuing a Master's at University of Houston, and completing the 150+ hour provisional course. Over the next 14 years as an active, she would make the most of each hour and leave the League prepared for the tumultuous 1970s after serving as President of the League in 1969.

## A Message from the

President

The Junior League of Houston, Inc., takes great pleasure in extending a cordial welcome to each of you to the twenty-second annual Charity Ball, "An Evening of Numerantics."

The choice of numbers as a central theme for this event is especially appropriate when considered in terms of the thousands of indigent children who over the past forty-three years have received medical attention through the Junior League's involvement in the field of child health.

This fun-filled evening will assure the financial support of our hospital projects—the Junior League Out-Patient Department at Texas Children's Hospital and the Model Well Baby Clinic at Hermann Hospital. During the past year Junior League volunteers placed in these two projects assisted in caring for patients that filled a combined total of 23, 192 appointments. This record number will be surpassed in 1970 when the greatly expanded facilities of the Junior League Out-Patient Department at Texas Children's Hospital are completed.

All members of the Junior League join me in expressing our deepest appreciation to you, our loyal friends, for your continued interest and generosity. As you enjoy the pleasures of "An Evening of Numerantics" you will also be benefiting countless numbers of our community's children.

Jala Asche Ackerman



Vale's letter and photo for the 1970 Charity Ball Program, the theme was Numerantics

Vale began her active League service conducting tours at the Museum of Natural History (now the Houston Museum of Natural Science). From there she served on the Admissions Committee twice – a role that was formerly selected by the voting membership. She



Vale on the cover of Houston News, April 1969, for the issue announcing the Executive Committee slate for 1969 – 1970.

took on board roles six times including years as Houston News Sheet Editor, Placement Chairman, Assistant Treasurer, Public Relation Chairman and First Vice President. When slated to serve as President, members praised her work ethic and steadfast commitment to the League's mission.

As she wrote in her first News Sheet column as President in 1969, members were standing on a bridge between two decades. The 1960s had brought about great social changes that would

only accelerate in the 1970s. The League had always stepped up to meet critical community needs. There were now more volunteer organizations than ever before doing good work. If the League was to remain "a viable force responsive to the vigorous urban complex which

is the community of Houston that we serve," it would need to offer even more informative and innovative training for its members. League leadership would need to create more opportunities for members and community stakeholders to converse. The League would begin by rallying around the 1969 -1970 theme, "Informed Communication (leads to) Involved Participation."



Houston News, November 1961, Vale pictured with the rest of Houston delegation to AJLA (now AJLI) regional conference to Mexico. She is the second from the right.



Vale posing with Russell Blattner, then Physician-in-Chief at Texas Children's. She was presenting the hospital with a gift of \$30,000 for the Junior League Outpatient Department

As a sustainer, Vale devoted her time outside the League to serving on a variety of boards including the Texas Medical Center and the Executive Committee of the Hermann Eye Fund. She spent tireless hours learning about Houston nonprofits on behalf of the Vale-Asche Foundation, founded by her father and grandfather. Over the years, her family foundation has provided grants to more than 100 organizations that provide outstanding direct, hands-on service to constituencies in need in the areas of health, education, the arts, and beyond. The foundation generously supported the League as a Community Partner numerous years.

The League is deeply grateful to Vale Asche Russell for the hours and decades of service she devoted to the organization. It is incredible to see that the relevance she called for in 1970 remains an essential priority today.

## **ACTIVE PLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS**

1968 - 1969

1969 - 1970

1956 – 1957	Provisional
1957 – 1958	Museum of Natural History Tours
1958 – 1959	Admissions Committee
1959 – 1960	Assistant Placement Chairman
1960 – 1961	Assistant Treasurer
1961 – 1962	Houston News Sheet Editor
1962 – 1963	Idea-Exchange Meeting Secretary, Admissions Committee
1963 – 1964	In-League Fundraising Committee Treasurer
1964 – 1965	Charity Ball Reservations Chairman
1965 – 1966	Placement Chairman
1966 – 1967	Tea Room
1967 – 1968	Public Relations Chairman

First Vice President

President



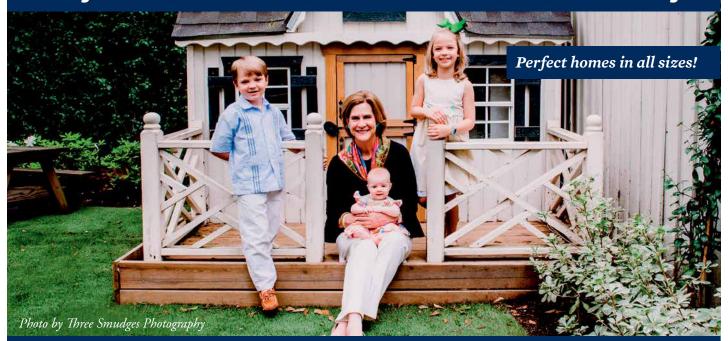




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## SUSTAINER EVENT Backa Sauch by Peggy Roe

Without a doubt, Houston's historic Azalea Trail—sponsored by River Oaks Garden Club—is the first and most glorious harbinger of spring in our magnificent city. And this year, it was among the most breath-taking of all! The weather cooperated beautifully, allowing the fragile azalea blossoms to cling to their branches just long enough to present a feast for the eyes.

Sustaining members of the Junior League enjoyed that visual feast when they hit the trail on Friday, March 6, 2020, via chartered bus. Co-chairing the tour were **Cindy Vietor Kahle** and **Susan** 

Ripley Hilliard, whose imaginations were as bountiful as the blossoms. These two creative forces launched the experience with a seated luncheon in the Tea Room and concluded with a private reception in the home of Kelty Ewing Crain. Kelty, a League member, opened her gorgeous home not only to her sister sustainers but also to the general

public as part of the Trail. Elizabeth Stone,

Azalea Trail co-chair, generously provided the food and beverages, compliments of her catering company, Silver Stone Events.

Enjoying gastronomic experiences was just a side bar of this travelers' tale. For one of the first times in the Azalea Trail's 85-year history, two homes in Courtlandt Place were on the tour. Both homes bore historical markers dating the homes to 1915 and 1917.

Joanie Amacker Haley remarked, "The homes were beautifully decorated with lovely artwork and historical memorabilia while the gardens beckoned us to explore their tranquil serenity." Although the sustainers visited two homes in River Oaks and two in Courtlandt Place, the full venue also included Bayou Bend Collection

and Gardens, Rienzi, and The Forum.

Looking back on the Azalea Trail,

co-chairman Elizabeth Stone admitted
that finding four private homes was the
biggest challenge. Not knowing until the
week before Christmas that they had secured
the much-needed fourth home, Elizabeth
said she and co-chairman Julia Gregg

DeWalch "increased activities at the Forum
to compensate, adding a pollinator exhibit, a

farmer's market, and a life-sized flower wall—all of which turned out to be highly successful." When asked about their greatest joy, Julia, a former League president, replied, "[It was] working with my co-chair, the amazing volunteers who did their jobs with enthusiasm and smiles on their faces, and the homeowners who were so gracious and generous." Julia nicknamed this year's tour, "the Trail with the nicest homeowners," because they were so accommodating, nice and helpful.

"Accommodating, nice and helpful" also describes the efforts that were made by the sustainer co-chairs, the Trail co-chairs and—let's not forget—the fearless bus driver who ensured that the sustainers' tour of the Azalea Trail was as spectacular as the homes and gardens they visited. The bounty of beauty and the fellowship of friends made the day a glorious one indeed.



Kelty Ewing Crain, house and garden hostess, Julia Gregg DeWalch, Trail co-chair, and Elizabeth Stone, Trail co-chair



Analisa Brandt Frazier, Susan Ripley Hilliard, bus trip co-chair, and Cindy Vietor Kahle, bus trip co-chair





Carol Ann Weber Paddock, Liz Winfield Rigney, Marjorie Carter Cain, League sustainers and River Oaks Garden Club volunteers



Carol Ann Weber Paddock, Marjorie Carter Cain, Kay Ridley Rice, Julia Gregg DeWalch, and Elizabeth Stone beside the Garden Club car that Minnie Baird donates and decorates every year for the Trail







## BUBBLES BRUNCH

The Tea Room Special Events Committee
plans and hosts a variety of events and
informal style shows throughout the
year that support Tea Room operations.

Bubbles and Brunch is a fantastic event that gives League members and Tea Room patron members the opportunity to dine at the League on a weekend and take advantage of the Tea Room's brunch offerings.

This spring's brunch on Sunday, March 8, 2020, included an informal style show featuring Lilly Pulitzer's iconic resort wear designs and magical prints while the guests enjoyed a three-course brunch and bottomless mimosas.



















## JLH MINOR LEAGUERS' PRESENT

Story Time Teas

Story Time Tea is an opportunity for League members and Tea Room patron members to bring their children, grandchildren and young friends to the Tea Room for an enjoyable afternoon of tea, favorite stories and storybook characters.

Volunteers read popular children's books including *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* and *Giraffes Can't Dance* to the young

guests and the League served a buffet of "tea time" inspired sandwiches, light bites, desserts, an assortment of specialty teas, Arnold Palmers and lemonade in between each book. These events allow League and Tea Room patron members the opportunity to share their love of the League with the special children in their lives, experiencing the fun /

















The League Legends Annual Fund supports the mission of the Junior League of Houston and provides meaningful resources to the League that create an immediate and substantial impact. The League Legends Annual Fund is essential to supporting three key aspects of the Junior League, which include the Operating Fund, Building Preservation Fund and the Community Program Fund.

The Junior League of Houston is grateful for the strong commitment and generous support of the *League Legends* Annual Fund donors. You can still donate to the League Legends Annual Fund by visiting www.jlh.org/annualfund.

## DIAMOND LEGEND

Friend of the League
Ms. Mary Kyger
Schwab Fund for Charitable Giving
on behalf of Mrs. Patricia Brice

## PLATINUM LEGEND

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# ECRET ARDEN 2020 CHARITY BALL THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF HOUSTON

by Lindsey Falconer

The 72nd Annual Charity Ball – Secret Garden showed that beautiful blooms truly do bring hope as the Ball raised nearly \$850,000 to support the Junior League of Houston's mission to promote voluntarism across the Houston community.

For a few nights in early February, the League building was transformed into a Secret Garden. As guests arrived, they were greeted with a canopy of greenery and roses created by Bramble & Bee. As they made their way into the ball, floral surprises were around every corner, including garden swings in the courtyard, a flower cart with take-away posies by Lanson B. Jones & Company in the Tea Room and a "Secret (beer) Garden" on the back lanai.

Guests were encouraged to pick baubles from the Buccellati Blossom Bar by Tenenbaum Jewelers and participate in the Big Board and silent auction. Featured items included an escape to Banff, a night at the theater and the opportunity to drive a Sewell car for all seasons.

As she invited everyone to sit for dinner, President Jayne Sheehy Johnson reminded everyone of the reason the League holds the Ball every year, to raise funds that ensure that the Junior League will continue to provide critical community programs for a better Houston, as well as essential training to unlock the potential in all of our dedicated volunteers . Funds raised at Charity Ball and other events are paired with more than 100,000 hours of service from League volunteers, resulting in an

annual contribution to the Houston community that exceeds \$2 million through the League's community projects and community assistance grants.

Once the dessert course was passed, the Charity Ball all-volunteer member cast invited guests to "Come to My Garden" as the talent of the League was showcased through musical numbers featuring singers and instrumentalists including a cellist and pianist with ballet dancers en pointe. As the show ended, cast members pulled guests from tables and invited them to join the party getting started in the Tea Room.

Late night party guests danced the night away to tunes by DJ London on Friday night and DJ Athenz on Saturday night. As the party extended into midnight, Whataburger Honey Butter Chicken Biscuits were brought out to help ease any cravings.

In addition to two fabulous evenings of the Charity Ball, the weekend kicked off with a Friends & Family night celebration – Garden Party - which encouraged members to give a glimpse of the Ball's glamour to their families. The little Leaguers enjoyed a preview of the Charity Ball show and danced into early evening with their own DJ. All three nights were a smashing success thanks to the hard work and volunteer hours of Charity Ball Chairman Mary Lee Hackedorn Wilkens and the 52 women on Charity Ball committees, 20 members of the cast, and over 160 women working SETs, who ensured that the event went off without a hitch.





continued

























## SECRET GARDEN CHARITY BALL WOULD LIKE TO THANK THESE VENDORS:



















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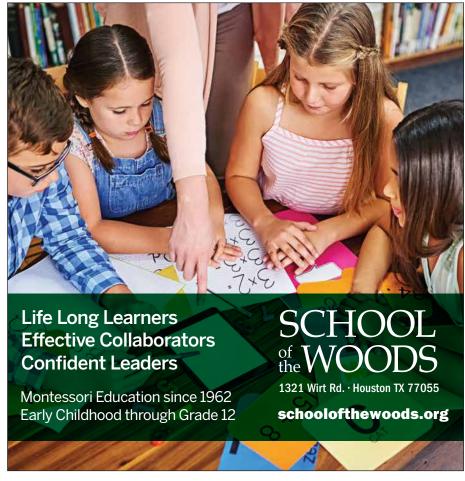
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