

WINTER 2025



# FOCUS

The Official Newsletter of the Junior League of Lansing



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Stephanie Collier, 2023-2025 President



I am filled with immense pride and excitement about the growth the Junior League of Lansing has experienced this year. This growth is a powerful testament to the strides we've made together in advancing our mission.

Since our founding in 1931, JLL has been dedicated to *advancing women's leadership for meaningful community impact through volunteer action,*

*collaboration, and training.* This mission drives every initiative we undertake and anchors our strategic efforts.

Last year, we laid a strong foundation by prioritizing our strategic plan for 2024-2027. With more than 125 dedicated volunteer hours, we established four main priorities: embedding our mission, enhancing membership recruitment, diversifying community engagement, and cultivating proactive leadership.

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## 2024-2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### President

Stephanie Collier (2023-2025)

### President-Elect and Nominating Chair

Leia Cooper-Rigg (2024-2025)

### Treasurer

Lisa Whiting Dobson (2023-2025)

### Secretary

Allison Purtell (2024-2026)

### Executive Vice President

Alexis Murray (2024-2026)

### Sustaining Member At-Large

Janine Medler (2023-2025)

## 2024-2025 MANAGEMENT TEAM

### Executive Vice President

Alexis Murray (2024-2026)

### Community Vice President

Brittany Risk (2024-2026)

### Education Vice President

Tricia Brentar (2024-2026)

### Fund Development Vice President

Ana Whitman (2024-2025)

### Membership Vice President

Resa Tran-TenBrink (2023-2025)

### Sustaining Management Advisor

Lori Noyer (2023-2025)

## MISSION STATEMENT

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

## President's Message, continued from page 1

This foundation set the stage for the profound growth we've seen so far this year.

One of our proudest moments came on Sept. 19, 2024, when we celebrated "Find the Good Day."

The proclamations from the City of Lansing and the Governor's office were a remarkable recognition of our persistent efforts to spark positive change in our community. This acknowledgment not only honored our past but also propelled us forward, reaffirming the importance of our mission in the eyes of our local community and statewide.

Our community's collaboration extended further as we supported numerous local events and initiatives. From packing Thankful Bags with the MSU Food Bank, volunteering with Child and Family Charities, to supporting Lansing's Trick or Trail, we continued to enhance our engagement and build upon our meaningful partnerships. Through these activities, we diversified our community involvement, providing more opportunities for our membership.

This year, we have seen significant growth in leadership within JLL. The increased number of applications for leadership positions demonstrates a reinvigorated interest among members to step up, lead, and drive our mission forward. This response ensured a successful slate, indicating that our efforts to create meaningful, manageable roles aligned with JLL's needs are indeed bearing fruit.

Our members continue to exemplify our strategic pillars of engagement and leadership. Our GMM trainings, AJLI and SLBI conferences, and additional training programs have given our members the tools they need to lead with confidence and agility. These trainings have a direct correlation to bolstering our leadership pipeline, and JLL remains committed to offering robust trainings to our members as they look to grow in their civic leadership.

Recruitment this year has been particularly robust. Events like the Fall Recruitment at Phillips Cider Bar and the "Gobble and Give" at Sidecar Slider Bar have attracted new and returning members who are enthusiastic about joining our mission. This growth in Active members underscores our success in creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all.

The Sustainer Luncheon, member brunches, and social gatherings such as candle making at The Beeswax Barrn have strengthened connections among our members. These events have fostered camaraderie and a shared sense of purpose, vital for our organizational health and community impact.

As we look ahead to the remainder of the 2024-2025 year, our commitment to growth remains steadfast. We will continue to engage in meaningful community partnerships, enhance our operational efficiency, and foster a supportive environment for leadership.

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President's Message, continued from page 2

Our upcoming events, including GMMs, the MSU Destination Auction, and the JLL 5K fundraiser, will provide further opportunities to strengthen our alignment with supporting our mission and strategic goals.

With every survey, meeting, and member and volunteer event, we reinforce our dedication to the mission of advancing women's leadership for meaningful community impact. These efforts are not just about short-term gains but about creating lasting change that transcends our immediate community.

You, the dedicated women of JLL, are the engine behind our growth and success. Your passion makes all the difference. Together, we are developing women to do a world of good, and our collective efforts continue to build a legacy of hope, kindness, and impactful change.

Let us continue to grow, inspire, and make a meaningful difference in our community. Thank you for your commitment and enthusiasm, and for continuing to make JLL a beacon in our community.

Together in service,

*Stephanie*

**IT STARTS  
WITH A WOMAN**

# 2025 GMMs



**Save the Date!**  
**Year-End Celebration**  
**June 10 | The Graduate**

**Announcing the  
2025-2026  
Leadership  
Slate**

Treasurer: Lisa Whiting Dobson  
Sustaining Member At-Large:  
Angela Vlahakis-Bigelow  
Nominating Chair: Maggie Louks  
Fund Development VP: Beth Ronning  
Membership VP: Carlee Knott  
Nominating Committee:  
Janine Medler, Resa Tran-TenBrink,  
Ana Whitman

# COMMUNITY

The Community Council focuses on developing community partnerships, volunteer opportunities, grantmaking, and advocacy efforts.

Community Vice President: Brittany Risk  
SPAC Delegate: Heidi Hansen  
Volunteer Co-Chairs: Lauren Enty and Kylee Mohammed

## Find the Good Day

Junior League of Lansing members gathered at Cleats Bar & Grille to celebrate AJLI's 2nd Annual Find the Good Day on Sept. 19, 2024. Now more than ever, the world needs greater optimism, positivity, and resilience. Optimism has been proven to positively impact our health, motivation, outcomes, and performance. This event is an opportunity to raise awareness for the good work of our League, recruit and enlist new members, and band together with Leagues across the association under a common purpose.

This social with a purpose was a great kickoff to the League year, featuring great weather, delicious snacks, and uplifting company. Members were joined by Lynse Tait of Helping Women Period, a nonprofit focused on ending period poverty throughout Michigan. Junior League of Lansing members collected and donated more than 2,000 period-product items to those in need. JLL President Stephanie Collier, Executive Vice President Alexis Murray, and Community Vice President Brittany Risk gave remarks and presented Find the Good Day Proclamations from Lansing Mayor Andy Schor and Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. Thanks to all who helped plan and attend a wonderful event to celebrate the good we find in ourselves, our community, and the world around us.



Attendees at Find the Good Day



## Volunteer Activities

In the first half of the year, JLL members participated in several volunteer opportunities.

Members met a critical request and volunteered at the Michigan State University Food Bank. The work allowed MSU to serve its students safely and more efficiently. JLL members packed and assembled 250 "thankful bags" for students to take during the Thanksgiving Break. Members learned more about food access on campus, met food bank staff, and built connections with fellow Junior League members.

The Volunteer Committee also partnered with other councils to collect needed items, such as baking supplies and culturally preferred spices and ingredients at JLL events.

Heidi Hansen hosted our second annual Bubbles and Bows event, benefiting Siren Shelter. Members donated gifts for the Christmas Room where residents can "shop" for Christmas.

Every year, Child and Family Charities provides holiday gifts to 1,500 children living in residential programs and gifts to at least 100 local families. Members assisted in unloading gifts from semi-trucks and sorting the gifts.

## Community Fund Grant

Several years ago, the Junior League of Lansing established a Community Fund to grant money each year to a community organization. Members nominate local nonprofits that serve our focus area of food, shelter, and access to essential needs. End Violent Encounters (EVE) was nominated and selected as the recipient of the grant for the 2024-2025 year, in the amount of \$4,589.68. EVE is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that provides supportive services to survivors of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and elder abuse. The organization fits within our issue area by providing emergency shelter to domestic violence survivors.

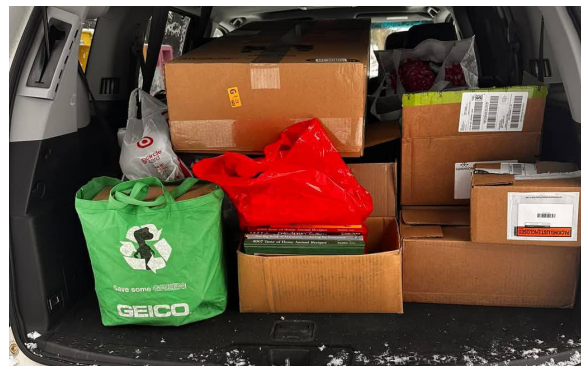
## Advocacy

The Junior League of Lansing participates in the State Public Affairs Committee of the Michigan State Council of Junior Leagues. Heidi Hansen serves as our current SPAC delegate, providing a critical link to MSC SPAC meetings and events, education on legislative issues and process, and opportunities to participate in advocacy related to the current MSC focus areas of child welfare, youth in foster care, and human trafficking.

This past fall, SPAC advocated for Senate Bills 515-517 and House Bills 5836-5854 and 5864 to be brought to a vote on Nov. 13, 2024. These bills expand protections to human trafficking victims, strengthen tools to hold traffickers accountable, modernize statute language, and expand training standards. SPAC is in the process of selecting a new focus area of women's health.

## CARE Task Force

In 2023, we initiated a new task force, Community Area Resource Examination (CARE), chaired by the Community Vice President. The goal of this task force is to determine what focus area best aligns with our mission and the current needs of the Greater Lansing community. Last year, the task force focused on interviews with community stakeholders to understand the most pressing issues faced by vulnerable members of the community. This year, our task force will be focusing on reviewing needs assessments conducted by local organizations, researching local opportunities for meaningful community impact within each of the new focus areas defined by AJLI, and disseminating task force findings before implementation of a formal adoption process, should a new focus area be identified.



Donations for Bubbles and Bows



Packing "thankful bags" at the MSU Food Bank



Volunteers at the MSU Food Bank

## Kudos

*On behalf of the MSU Student Food Bank, I want to extend our heartfelt gratitude for your dedication and hard work.*

*It is inspiring to see such a dedicated group come together with a shared goal of making a positive impact. The hours you spend sorting, organizing, sanitizing, unboxing, and labeling are deeply appreciated.*

*Your efforts will make a tremendous difference for the students we serve. We look forward to continuing to work together and making even more strides in the fight against hunger.*

*With sincere appreciation,*

*Kristin Traskie  
Executive Director of Health Promotion, Engagement,  
Accessibility, and Accommodations*

# EDUCATION

The Education Council promotes training and education for leadership, new members, and all League members, plans General Membership Meetings and member engagement events, and coordinates all educational programs and processes for League and the community.

Education Vice President: Tricia Brentar  
Member Events Co-Chairs: Charley Hays  
and Amanda Pugh

## GMMs and Trainings

Our League year kicked off at our General Membership Meeting in September with a training on financials from our Treasurer Lisa Whiting Dobson and a Member Essentials training from our Executive VP Alexis Murray.

October brought some order(ing) of pizza to our GMM as Education VP Tricia Brentar and Executive VP Alexis Murray reviewed Robert's Rules of Order.

With the holiday season approaching in November, Sustainer Jaimie Hutchison spoke to our membership about Empowering Women Through Healthy Boundaries.

Moving into 2025, members will continue to receive training as part of our ongoing commitment to living our mission.



Candle making



Brunch at Bordeaux



2024 Year-End Celebration

## Member Engagement Events

**Brunch at Bordeaux in October** - Members enjoyed time connecting and eating brunch together at this beautiful location inside the Crowne Plaza.

**Candle Making at Beeswax Barrn in Haslett in November** - Participants learned about the advantages of using beeswax candles. Did you know that they clean our air of odors, pollens, smoke, dust, and more? Members also enjoyed delicious snacks and drinks and were able to make candles to take home. Dipping candles was a new experience for almost everyone! Malinda Barr, owner of the Beeswax Barrn, was a gracious hostess and teacher and we will definitely take advantage of her hospitality again!

The Member Events Co-Chairs and Committee have also supported the Community, Membership and Sustainer Councils at numerous events, including Find the Good Day, Bubbles and Bows, Recruitment Events, and the Holiday Open House.

# SPECIAL THANKS

## Legacy Society Members

Anonymous  
Ken and Ginny Brooks  
John and Sandy Grettenberger  
Sue Mills  
Mary Beth Pirich

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Junior League of Lansing Endowment Fund. The Endowment supports the mission of JLL in perpetuity and we are grateful to our founding members for the foresight to establish this endowment fund to benefit the women of this community.

As of Feb. 2, 2025, the current fund balance is \$739,458. As our Endowment Fund balance grows, its financial impact on our League will continue to grow.

Our members generously support our League every year through donations, tribute gifts in memory or honor of a loved one, and dues round-up. Thank you for remembering the Endowment Fund throughout the year, whether it's a year-end donation, birthday or Mother's Day gift, or simply to make a gift to let someone know you are in their thoughts, your gift matters.

We invite you to join the Legacy Society. Please consider making a gift of \$5,000 or more by pledge or an estate gift. For more information or to make a gift today, please visit [jllansing.org/endowment-fund](http://jllansing.org/endowment-fund). Thank you to our existing members who have made this commitment.

We would like to recognize our donors who made contributions from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024.

Susan Allis  
Kathryn Ault  
Mary Ann Austin  
Elizabeth Bacon  
Bridget Balesky  
Candace Barnes  
Cheryl Bartholic  
Joan Bauer  
De'Shondria Bedenfield  
Justine Bell  
Kathleen Bens  
Lisa Biering  
Stacy Bogard  
Shelley Boyd  
Susan Brewster  
Christine Brogan  
Juliette Buckberry  
Paula Campbell  
Christina Carr  
Barbara Clark  
Barbara Cleland  
Catherine Cleveland  
Georgia Condon  
Jenny Corr  
De De Coy  
Patricia Croom  
Marilyn DesJardins  
Barbara Duda  
Carolyn Dudley  
Darrell Duffield  
Lynn Dwight  
Caryn Edwards  
Wendy Faulhaber  
Barbara Fishell  
Gretchen Forsyth  
Tricia Foster

Heather Frick  
Lori Fuller  
Barbara Galloway  
Donna Gardner  
Marcia Gresens  
Sandy Grettenberger  
Linda Grua  
Jody Haddad  
Barbara Hamilton  
Heidi Hansen  
Phyllis Harden  
Debby Harrison  
Annie Hayes  
Marcia Horton  
Karen Hubbard  
Katharine Hude  
Jaimie Hutchison  
Tracy Jelneck  
Jan Kahl  
Colleen Keiper  
Elizabeth King  
Rebecca Kosta  
Suzanne Kregel  
Michelle Lange  
Cathy Lazar  
Mary Liechty  
Barbara Ruth Lindquist  
Sandy Little  
Maggie Louks  
Alexis Lupo  
Susan Lutz  
Katie Lynwood  
Dorothy Martin  
Karen McCloskey  
Sherene McCloy  
Ellen McKay

Janine Medler  
Dianne Mohnke  
Nanci Mooney  
Betty Moore  
Lori Noyer  
Marilyn Nugent  
Rebecca Paalman  
Jennifer Pace  
Maggie Papesh  
Candy Parker  
Susan Patterson  
Mary Beth Pirich  
Jennifer Pope  
Kristen Pricco  
Janice Reed  
Pamela Ruth  
Lisa Sack  
Nicki Sanford  
Catherine Schwartz  
Denise Shaheen  
Nancy Shepard  
Linda Smith  
Dorothy Spousta  
Charlene Sproles  
Laura Stoken  
Katie Strong  
Betsy Svanda  
Diana Tarpoff  
Angela Vlahakis-Bigelow  
Ann Vogelsang  
Pamela Wakeland  
Mary West  
Lisa Whiting Dobson  
Ana Whitman  
Carolyn Willoughby  
Barbara Wirtz

# ENDOWMENT REPORT

The Fund Development Council coordinates and evaluates all League fundraising efforts, manages all League solicitation needs, and researches and reports on revisions or additions to fundraising efforts.

Fund Development Vice President: Ana Whitman  
 Annual Fund Chair: Ally Caldwell  
 Event Fundraiser Chair: Beth Ronning

## Annual Raffle

We are incredibly grateful to have Ally Caldwell leading the Annual Raffle for the second consecutive year. Joining Ally on the committee are De'Shondria Bedenfeld and Kily Buta.

Raffle planning began in August with tasks such as setting the timeline and brainstorming prize themes. September and October were spent securing raffle prizes through emails, phone calls, and in-person visits. After confirming prizes in late October, tickets were printed and distributed to members at the November General Membership Meeting. The raffle drawing took place on Feb. 18, 2025.

The minimum ticket sales goal is 10, but selling 20 tickets allows us to double the funds raised for our mission. With the addition of a sixth prize this year, including two prize options designed to attract buyers outside the Lansing area.

This year's raffle prizes are below:

**Grand Prize: \$1,500 cash**

**2nd Prize: Night Out Package valued at \$625**

- ◆ Wharton Center Gift Basket
- ◆ One-night stay at The Graduate Hotel East Lansing
- ◆ \$50 Restaurant Gift Card

**3rd Prize: On the Town Package valued at \$563**

- ◆ Four Lansing Lugnuts Baseball Tickets
- ◆ Lansing Shuffle: Shuffleboard Package
- ◆ Impression 5 Gift Basket plus Passes
- ◆ Four Potter Park Zoo Tickets
- ◆ \$100 Zap Zone XL Gift Card

**4th Prize: On the Town Package valued at \$378**

- ◆ \$100 Douglas J Gift Certificate East Lansing
- ◆ Hot Yoga – Pack of 10 Classes
- ◆ Stony Lake Toffee Co. Homemade Toffee Gift Basket
- ◆ \$25 Foster Coffee Company Gift Card
- ◆ \$50 Sweet Encounter Gift Card

**5th Prize: Jackpot Pamper Package valued at \$315**

- ◆ \$150 Massage Bliss Gift Certificate
- ◆ \$100 Firekeepers Casino Gift Card
- ◆ \$65 Ameysing Graze Gift Certificate

**6th Prize: \$250 Costco Gift Card**

**Grand Prize: Elizabeth Townsley**

**2nd Prize: Brent Oliver** (sold by Amanda Pugh)

**3rd Prize: Stephen Mitchell** (sold by Ana Whitman)

**4th Prize: Denise Bowman** (sold by Kily Buta)

**5th Prize: LeAnn Dochstader** (sold by Carlee Knott)

**6th Prize: Roxan Wilkinson** (Sold by Ashley Smith)

Congratulations to all our winners and members who sold winning tickets!

We raised \$10,110 (**1,011 tickets sold**) for this year's raffle, exceeding our \$8,000 goal. Thank you to our Actives, Provisionals, and Sustainers who sold raffle tickets this year. Your efforts and time are greatly appreciated.

Our top ticket sellers were:

Sue Mills: **201**

Ana Whitman: **123**

Lori Noyer: **50**

Alexis Murray: **50**

Jennifer Pope: **50**

Carlee Knott: **50**

Ashley Smith: **43**

Ally Caldwell: **36**

Laura Stoken: **34**

## bRUNch and Walk 5K

The Fundraising Event Committee, led by Beth Ronning and members Michelle Adams, Kristina Bilowus, Domonique Brace, Molly Lewis, and Carlie Richards, has been busy planning our 3rd annual bRUNch and

Walk 5K, scheduled for **Sunday, June 8**—mark your calendars! Planning meetings began in September, where the committee reviewed past events, identified areas for improvement, set the timeline, and secured the brunch venue and race route. The focus has now shifted to sponsorships, advertising, race sign-ups, and day-of logistics.

While it's the Fund Development Council's role to launch these fundraisers, it takes the collective effort of the entire membership to secure the funds necessary to support our mission. Thanks to the dedication of our members, we can continue investing in member development through training and conferences, as well as giving back to our community through grants, sponsorships, and scholarships. Thank you, JLL members, for your ongoing support of our mission!

The Membership Council recruits, onboards, and supports New Members while also supporting current members throughout their League career.

Membership Vice President: Resa Tran-TenBrink  
New Member Chair: Carlee Knott

## Recruitment

This year, as part of our commitment to growth and member engagement, JLL set a goal to recruit 10 new members to our League. The New Member Committee has hosted unique and engaging social events for those interested in the Junior League of Lansing including Fall Fun at Phillips Cider Bar, Gobble & Give at Sidecar Slider Bar, Zoo Lights with League, and Small Business Saturday with League. Because of the New Member Committee efforts, we had seven Provisionals commit to the Junior League of Lansing this winter, with three achieving Active status within months. They will begin their First-Year Active placements this spring.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FIRST-YEAR ACTIVES



**Kristina Bilowus**



**Megan English**



**Sarah Schultz**

## HOW CAN I HELP WITH RECRUITMENT?

The New Member Committee continues to expand our recruitment strategies and efforts. If you know someone who may be interested in joining or attending an informational social, please email [newmember@jllansing.org](mailto:newmember@jllansing.org) or have them visit [jllansing.org/join](http://jllansing.org/join). Pick up a recruitment flyer and recruitment business cards available at every General Membership Meeting.



# MEMBERSHIP

## Fall Sustainer Luncheon

The Fall Sustainer Luncheon was held Sept. 26 at the MSUFCU Farm Lane Community Room in East Lansing. Tables were adorned with festive fall decorations by Janine Medler. Attendees enjoyed the baked potato bar with chili and salad. JLL President Stephanie Collier provided an overview of the JLL Strategic Plan and Alexis Murray, Executive Vice President, provided a glimpse into the Annual Plan.

It takes all of us to help fulfill the goals of the Annual Plan. Sustainers were presented with a list of ways they could support the Councils. There is still time to get involved – reach out to Lori to discuss what might be of interest to you.

## Holiday Open House

For most of us, the holidays can be a busy time. However, that didn't stop Shelley Davis Boyd from hosting the Holiday Open House again. Nor did it stop the 25 Active, Sustainers and New Members from attending. There was lots of conversation and laughter of old and new friends gathering to connect.

This year, there was a gift exchange of our favorite things, a make-and-take simmer pot packet station, and a food drive to collect baking goods for the MSU Food Bank.

Festive appetizers and snacks were enjoyed. Thanks to the MSU School of Hospitality for providing cookies.

Thanks to the planning committee of Tricia Brentar, Charley Hays, Lori Noyer, and Amanda Pugh for a fun-filled evening.

## Welcome Sustainer Transfer

Welcome Cheryl Cerqueira! She transferred into JLL from the Junior League of Minneapolis this fall as a Sustainer. She recently returned to the Lansing area and was eager to connect with JLL. She has been enjoying the member events and meeting lots of new people. Be sure to say "hi" the next time you see her.

## Upcoming Events and Staying Involved

Looking for a few Sustainers to help plan the Spring Luncheon event. This event is tentatively targeted for April. If you are interested in brainstorming ideas, I'd love to hear from you. I'd like to schedule a planning meeting in mid-March. Please contact me at [SustainingAdvisor@jllansing.org](mailto:SustainingAdvisor@jllansing.org).

## Secure Your Tickets Today! MSU Destination Auction

Please join JLL at The MSU School of Hospitality Business' Destination Auction from **5 to 8 PM on Saturday, March 22**. JLL has enjoyed a longstanding partnership with the Destination Auction, and receives donations from proceeds of the event.

Tickets are \$25 and include event admission, parking, 2 drink tickets, and light appetizers.

Purchase tickets at [https://commerce.cashnet.com/msu\\_3829](https://commerce.cashnet.com/msu_3829) by scrolling down to Destination Auction, clicking View Category and selecting Tickets and Registration. Please also [register](#) through Member Essentials so we can track JLL attendees.



SUSTAINER UPDATE