# JUNIOR LEAGUE OF WATERLOO-CEDAR FALLS

2022 ANNUAL REPORT





### FROM OUR PRESIDENT

#### SARA MCSWEENEY

Legacy. Merriam-Webster defines legacy as: 1) a gift by will especially of money or other personal property and 2) something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past.

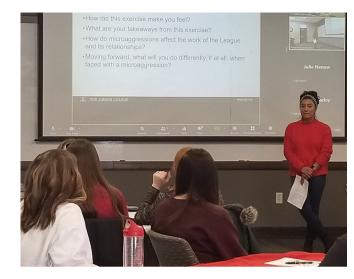
To me, legacy has an overly simplistic meaning of 'to leave a mark'. The idea of a legacy is much more complicated. At one of our General Membership Meetings, we were discussing the legacy of the Junior League of Waterloo-Cedar Falls and I was fascinated by the direction of the discussion. Members easily accepted that the Junior League will leave a legacy. It has already left a legacy through its rich history, and members in higher leadership positions leave a legacy. But the idea that each individual member leaves a legacy, was a bit harder for some to accept. I challenged members and myself to rethink that notion. The Junior League of Waterloo-Cedar-Falls has and will continue to leave a legacy in our community, but it is not the organization that does this. It is the members. The members are the legacy. Without our members there is no Junior League of Waterloo-Cedar Falls. Therefore every member is part of our legacy, whether you are our newest member, the President or the dedicated member somewhere in between.

This year, our legacy, has continued to be impacted by the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic will not define who we are or what we have done to impact our community, local teenagers, and our members. In 2016-2017, we piloted the League's Lockers program, and I am thrilled that it continues to thrive. In fact, we expanded to our FOURTH school, Expo High School, in Waterloo. We held our 3rd Annual Little Black Dress Initiative and welcomed one of our favorite speakers, Kimberly Fitten, to teach us all about living in harmony. In the spring, we were able to bring back Prom's Closet for a record breaking year! We brought it back safely, effectively, and with much fanfare from the line of people waiting at our doors. Our members welcomed the return of in person meetings and events, and we continued to offer virtual meetings. We continued our dedication to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging with valuable training, a new leadership role, and are expanding those efforts next year.

As the President this year, I am proud to represent the women of our League, the efforts in our community, our mission, and our legacy. Thank you for trusting in me with this honor. The 2021-2022 League Year is not a year of my legacy, it is the legacy of every one of our members! I want to thank every member, every community partner, every donor for your continued support and belief in this organization. We are better together and together we will leave a positive mark on the Cedar Valley!

Sara McSweeney 2021-2022 JLWCF President

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & BELONGING



This was the year we saw the Junior League of Waterloo-Cedar Falls' formal commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging come full circle! Our DEIB committee was formed and had a slated chair position for the 2021-2022 league year.

After 5 years of planning, the committee, chaired by Melanie Knipp, helped members explore tough concepts such as microaggressions and internal biases. Regular committee meetings were held throughout the year, members attended AJLI DEIB training, we participated in the Cedar Valley community "Caste" book club, and we even held our own DEIB Microaggression training organized and led by the chair. JLWCF was also awarded a grant from AJLI because of our dedication to DEIB. The grant money will be used to support and continue our DEIB efforts and trainings.

"THANK YOU FOR
YOUR SUPPORT TO
THE EXPO
STUDENTS! WE
APPRECIATE YOU!"
-COUNSELOR

The DEIB chair and committee led discussions in a gentle and encouraging way, giving every member an opportunity to examine their own beliefs and actions without judgment. The education which was provided gave our members an opportunity to have vulnerable and authentic conversation in small groups as we got to know each other better, paving the way for deeper connections to our league and each other. As we grow, we understand the importance of ensuring our organization reflects all of the amazing women in our community. We will continue to have these conversations and explore new ways of engaging a variety of potential members from all areas of the Cedar Valley, with a wide range of backgrounds. Every woman that joins our league makes a significant impact on the Cedar Valley. We are the community that every woman needs!







#### **MEMBERSHIP**

The Junior League of Waterloo-Cedar Falls is on a mission to positively impact the Cedar Valley. We know how crucial every single member is in fulfilling that mission. Our members are a mix of busy women juggling family, friends, careers and community, which often leads to multiple priorities competing for our most limited resource of time. While the goal is finding balance, life can often make us feel like we are sitting on a teeter totter wearing a blind fold, just waiting to pivot when the next priority jumps on the other side. Sometimes we hit the ground with a thud, while other times we fly high feeling a bit scared and excited all at once. This has been a year full of personal and professional challenges, changes and wins for each member.

"THERE WERE SO MANY BEAUTIFUL DRESSES. I LOVE MY DRESS! THANK YOU!"

- WATERLOO TEEN

#### Meetings & Ed

We wrapped up the previous year by hosting our Annual Dinner at Sunnyside, where we transitioned leadership and celebrated our newest Golden Rose Winner, Shanlee McNally. Then, our amazing Meetings & Ed team, Julie Nenow and Annie Gougler, worked diligently to kick off a strong new year by coordinating a variety of activities in locations that showcased the Cedar Valley. We teamed up as an entire league to set up for Prom's closet, completed professional development on networking skills, learned how to manage stress, and heard from community advocates. Between ice breakers, new technology, small group discussions and balancing Zoom with in person, we worked to up level our engagement at meetings. Meetings & Ed stepped up to the challenge of balancing social connection, education and volunteerism while meeting every member where they were and creating a safe space to be heard.





#### **Placement Advisors**

As we continue to explore the best structure of our organization to deliver high engagement, opportunities to develop skills and clear roles to make things happen, our Placement Advisors stepped into what some might say was the most challenging slating process in recent history. After lots of discussion, debate, and deliberation they delivered an Organization Chart that sets us up for an amazing 2022-2023 League year. We look forward to welcoming each member in their new roles and working with them to pass the baton!

#### **New Members**

This was an exciting year for the New Member Committee. The team was led by Stephanie Siedl who worked incredibly hard to identify and leverage every opportunity possible for our league to be visible to potential new members. Our first recruiting event, held at The Stuffed Olive, was a roaring success due to our members inviting friends they thought would be a great fit. Stephanie rocked the follow up on every lead, resulting in a group of 10 Provisionals and 2 already lined up for the next year. Other events hosted by the New Member Committee included Scheels Ladies Night Out and a redesigned New Member education process. We kicked off the Prom's Closet season by hosting an event called Donuts and Dresses, where we brought the new provisional members together to tackle a small project and get to know each other better.

Our newest members include: Briana Alexandres, Shelly Blanchard, Holly DiMarco, Meghan Goering, Kelley Hummel, Kristina Jordan and Abby Lis. As we celebrate these new additions to our team, we must also honor the women who have served our league so well through the years, that have chosen to go Sustaining. Our deepest gratitude to Emily Cabbage, Katy Harbaugh, Suzanne Dripps, and Brittany Schmitz for your leadership and positively impacting our legacy in the Cedar Valley for so many years!







#### **COMMUNITY IMPACT**

#### **Our Community**

The 2021-2022 League year amounted to another one we will never forget! As our members continued to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, we were thankful to see a returning to "normal", as we continued with new ways to conduct business, and hold hybrid meetings. Turning a corner in the pandemic, allowed for multiple in person volunteer events! We spent a morning at the Northeast Iowa Food Bank, where members sorted over 1,000 pounds of food for their Food Rescue Program. Members volunteered at House of Hope for Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. In the spring, members got their hands dirty when they participated in the Habitat for Humanity`s Women Build Month.

"THANK YOU FOR ALL
YOU DO. YOU ALL
MADE A DIFFERENCE
TO THESE YOUNG
PEOPLE AND
BOOSTED SELFESTEEM - LIKE
THROUGH THE
ROOF!"
-DHS WORKER

Our league continued our Community Impact goal of giving back by donating \$2,000 back into our community. Membership was given the opportunity to vote on how we would spend a portion of our Community Impact funds, voting for a favorite cause or program. It was decided to sponsor 50 Cedar Valley High School students by sending them to the Young Women in Leadership Conference hosted by the University of Northern Iowa in March. We fully sponsored a new hip hop class education class at the Boys and Girls Club Teen Center. Also, we sponsored and participated in the Habitat for Humanity`s Women Build month. The Junior League of Waterloo-Cedar Falls enjoyed a full year of getting back into in person volunteerism, and we look forward to continuing this into next year!







#### League's Lockers

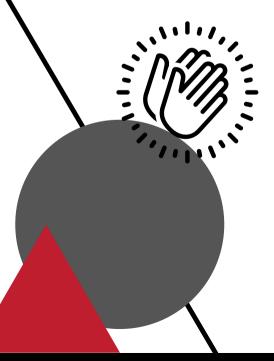
Our League`s Lockers program made exciting growth this year, as we expanded into Expo High School in Waterloo. This made the impact of League`s Lockers spread to four of our local high schools in the Cedar Valley. Cedar Falls High School, Waterloo East and West are the other three high schools already involved in League's Lockers. The Expo High School relationship with the Junior League of Waterloo-Cedar Falls had been in the working stages for the past year, and it was great to see it come to life. Expo was very grateful to receive supplies, making a positive impact on their students. We were ecstatic to expand our beloved program!

League's Lockers received specific requests this year for backpacks filled with hygiene products, belts, refillable water bottles, bottled water, and snacks. Healthy snacks are always a requested favorite from our counselors! Multiple counselors voiced the impact providing a healthy snack can do for a student! As always, we continued to provide school supplies and uniforms.

"I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU SO MUCH
FOR SPONSORING GLADBROOK-REINBECK
GIRLS TO BE ABLE TO ATTEND THE YOUNG
WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
THAT WAS HOSTED AT UNI. OUR GIRLS
REALLY ENJOYED IT! THANKS TO YOU
THEY HAD NO FINANCIAL HARDSHIP TO
ATTEND. THE GIRLS REALLY ENJOYED THE
CONFERENCE AND LEARNED A LOT OF
LESSONS THEY HAVE TAKEN AWAY AND
APPLIED TO THEIR LIFE."
- COUNSELOR







#### Prom's Closet

Our long standing crowd favorite, Prom`s Closet was back for 2022! The 11th annual event was held at Crossroads Mall on March 4th and 5th. After selling 173 prom dresses, and receiving \$3,500 from sponsoring partners, the Junior League of Waterloo Prom's Closet had a record year raising over \$7,000. Special thanks to our sponsors Farmer's State Bank & Meghan Goering Photography, as well as our In Kind sponsors Crossroads Mall and Q98.5, without their generous donations Prom's Closet would not be possible!



Prom's Closet vouchers are distributed each year to teens in foster care. This year 25 vouchers were given, good for the value of a dress, pair of shoes, and a jewelry item.

Prom's Closet is a league favorite not only because of the good it does for teens in our community, but for the teamwork which happens within our membership. This event draws the most involvement from our active membership. Not only is it a great way of mixing our provisional members together, but it brings our active membership together as a team to set up and run the event. The March General Membership Meeting was held as a Service Based Learning opportunity for all members to learn about the event, and the impact it has on our surrounding communities. Our Prom's Closet initiative helped make prom affordable for teens from 26 different schools, some from 2 hours away!













## LITTLE BLACK DRESS INITIATIVE

**FUND DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING/EVENTS** 

Looking back over the past year, it is amazing to see all the positive changes. The Fund Development and Marketing and Events Councils began the year cautiously optimistic but also ready to adapt to changes that may be thrown our way as we had become accustomed to in 2020.

"LIVING IN HARMONY
WITH YOURSELF; DO I
GIVE MYSELF GRACE?
DOES HOW I SEE
MYSELF IMPACT HOW
I SEE OTHERS?"
- KIMBERLY FITTEN

The 2021-2022 League year started off by planning our 3rd annual Little Black Dress Initiative (LBDI) week. The purpose of the Little Black Dress Initiative is to raise awareness surrounding issues that teens face in our community, while also introducing the Junior League of Waterloo-Cedar Falls and the work we do to people throughout the Cedar Valley and beyond. This year, LBDI was held November 8th-12th, 2021. While it was not clear early on, we were fortunate enough to be able to hold our LBDI Luncheon and membership celebration in person this year!



#### **LBDI**

During Little Black Dress Initiative Week, our members pledged to become advocates for our League. Each day, our members went "Plain for a Purpose" and wore the same black dress or t-shirt with the intention of representing the many people in our community who do not have the option to choose what they wear each day. We partnered once again with a local, woman-owned company, FormDash, to house all our fundraising and event needs. This included individual donations, luncheon tickets, silent auction bidding, and a raffle. Members were able to create their own donation affiliate links within the FormDash's JLWCF website that was created in 2020. Each day, members posted a photo of themselves in the same dress or t-shirt along with statistics showing the struggles facing teens in our community such as poverty, food insecurity, homelessness, foster care, period poverty, and mental health. With the help of our members' outreach, we raised over \$4,000 with the social media campaign, while also increasing our overall JLWCF exposure.









Our main event was a Luncheon held on Tuesday, November 9th, 2021 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Cedar Falls. The theme was The Power of Living and Operating Harmoniously, and featured Kimberly Fitten as the keynote speaker. Kimberly's presentation inspired attendees to operate in harmony in every aspect of their lives, by identifying how they see communication, collaboration, and camaraderie. The luncheon helped us raise over \$1,400 towards our campaign. Throughout the week, we held a virtual Silent Auction that included over 25 items donated by local businesses and leaders in our community. We also continued our partnership with Facet's by Susong and held a raffle with one of their beautiful pieces. Our auction and raffle closed on Friday and helped us raise over \$3,000 towards our LBDI campaign. The culmination of the week was our Friday night members celebration at Singlespeed in Waterloo, where we celebrated our work and accomplishments, drew for the Raffle prize, and closed our silent auction. It was a successful LBDI week and we were able to raise \$21,132.60 with the help of our members, generous corporate sponsors and local community partners and individuals.

#### **Fund Development**

Later on in the 2021 and 2022 League year, we continued our outreach and fundraising by including AmazonSmile and Minted.com, and have started to lay the groundwork for a more strategic fundraising initiative that will help sustain our programs for years to come!

#### 85th Anniversary Charity Ball

We are excited to announce that the Little Black Dress Initiative is taking a hiatus next year, and we will celebrate JLWCF's 85th Anniversary by bringing back Charity Ball on December 3rd 2022!

#### **COMMUNITY IMPACT**

6,901 Items Donated for
League's Lockers
50 Young Women Sponsored for a
Leadership Conference
1,000 lbs of Food Rescued
173 Dresses Sold

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

10 Provisional Members
196 Total Membership
1/3 of Active Membership Attended
DEIB Training

GET SOCIAL
INSTAGRAM:
QJRLEAGUEWCF
FACEBOOK PAGE: JUNIOR
LEAGUE OF WATERLOOCEDAR FALLS
TWITTER ACCOUNT:
QJRLEAGUEWCF
YOUTUBE: JUNIOR LEAGUE
OF WATERLOO-CEDAR
FALLS

# 2021-2022 LEAGUE YEAR AT A GLANCE

#### **MARKETING & EVENTS**

\$1,400 Raised from LBDI Luncheon
Over 55 Attendees of the LBDI Luncheon
Over 75 new social media followers

#### **FUND DEVELOPMENT**

\$21,133 Total raised during LBDI Week \$4,000 Social Media Campaign \$3,000 LBDI Silent Auction & Raffle Over \$7,000 raised from Prom's Closet

# **THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS**

Premier Sponsors - \$2,000+

Farmers State Bank
Standard Distribution Co.
Tito's Vodka
Bergen Plumbing, Heating & Cooling

### **Sponsor Part**ners - \$1,000

EMC Insurance
Follow Your Strengths
Trends by Friends
Meghan Goering Photography



JUNIOR LEAGUE OF WATERLOO-CEDAR FALLS

#### Promotional Partners - \$500

Cheryl Ewers
Facet's
Greenstate Credit Union
Lincoln Savings Bank
MidAmerican Energy
PDCM
Julie & Eric Ritland
The Sinnott Agency

# THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

#### **IN-KIND SPONSORS**

1850 Patio & Grill Bancroft's Barn Happy Brown Bottle Cedar Falls Cedar Valley Art & Wine Cedar Valley Sportsplex Crossroads Mall Damon's Fringe Salon Dr. David Congdon Famous Dave's Hearst Center for the Arts Hilton Garden Inn Humble Travel HyVee Jameson's

Kathy Cessna Lincoln Perk Maple Lanes Ryan & Melanie Knipp Mulligan's Oh, So In Boutique Pepper's Petersen & Tietz Pita Pit Raising Cane's Rocket's Bakery Salon Zola Scheels Screaming Eagle Slumberland Trends by Friends Salon Waterloo Community Playhouse

\*SEE JLWCF.ORG FOR COMPLETE LIST OF SPONSORS





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